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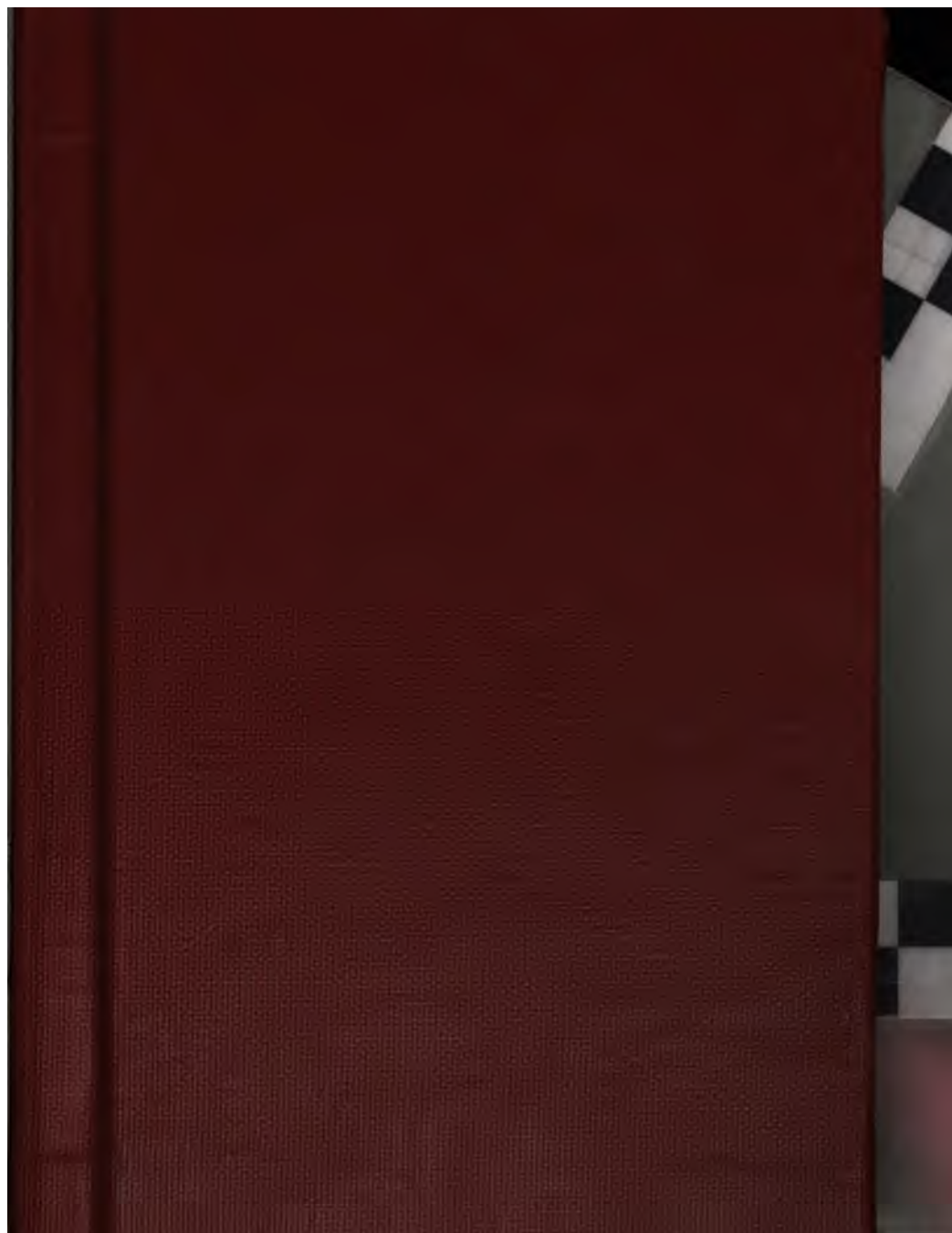
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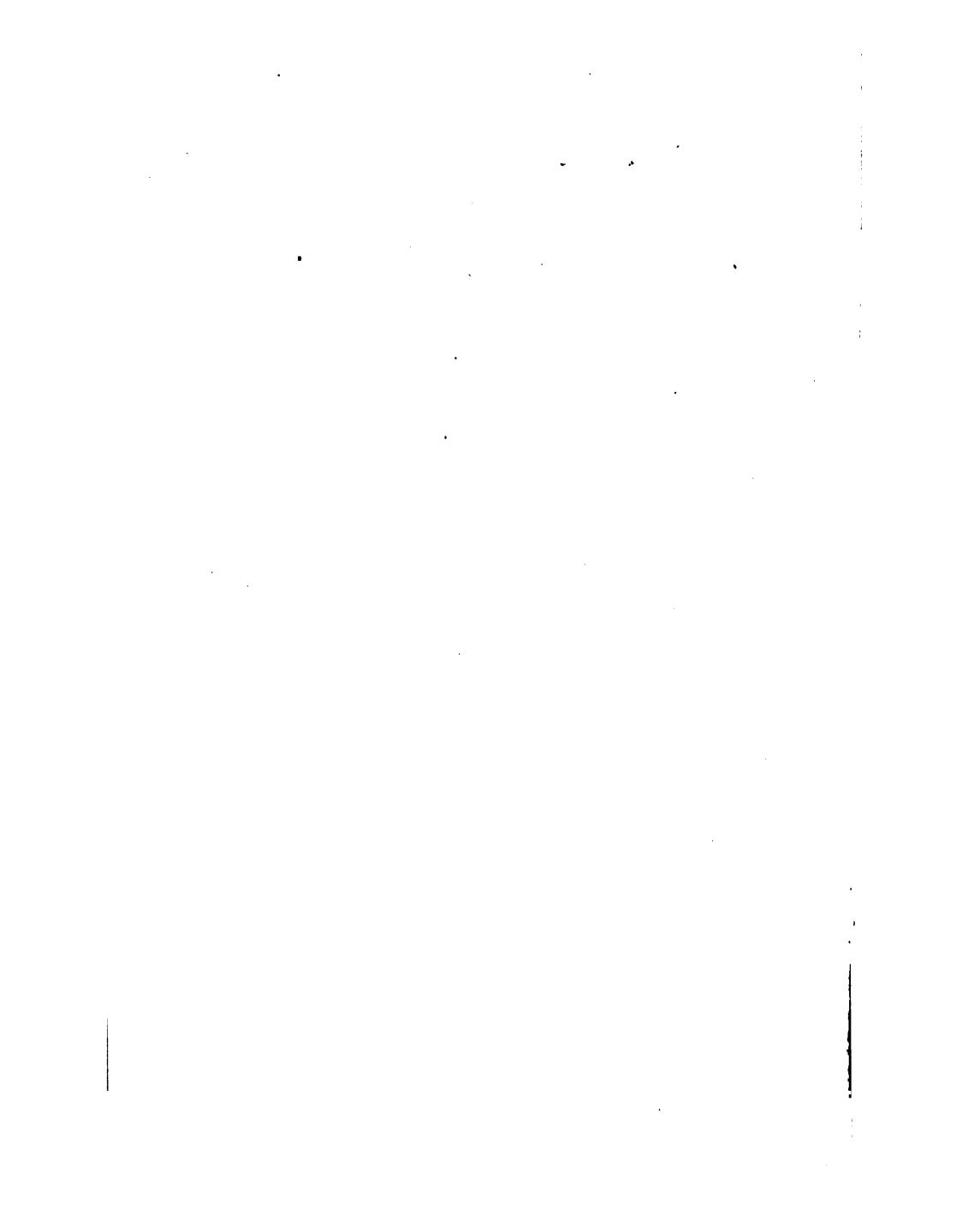






MARY, QUEEN OF SCOTS.

BALLANTYNE



20

"MARY, QUEEN OF SCOTS."



MARY QUEEN OF SCOTS.

J. R. R. E.

"MARY, QUEEN OF SCOTS,"

AN INCIDENT OF 1566,

BY

G. BALLANTYNE.

PART I.—"THE REIVER.

PART II.—"THE JUSTICE AYRE."

GALASHIELS:
A. WALKER & SON.

1907.

Gallicies:

A. WALKER & SON, PRINTERS, 113 HIGH STREET.

Dedication.

TO MY MOTHER

This second attempt at narrative verse is, with every feeling of dutiful affection, inscribed.

Jedburgh, 1907.

ERRATA.

Page 41, Line 1722.

"*What's* meant in Liddesdale."

Page 85, Line 1721.

"My temples throb, yet on my weary ears."

Page 87, Line 1778.

"Sank lower on his *breast*."

Page 97, Line 2240.

"Or the ~~revers~~—my lord, adieu!"

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PREFACE.

The theme which Mr Ballantyne has chosen as the subject of his muse is one full of interest for all students of Scottish history. The life-story of the beautiful, accomplished, but ill-fated Mary Stuart, Queen of Scots, has gathered around it such a wealth of sentiment of one kind and another that it is difficult to deal with it without provoking criticism alike on the part of friend and foe. On the one hand she is loved and adored, and on the other hated and detested with a depth and intensity of feeling rarely met with in the annals of history. Her eventful and meteoric career has divided the people of Scotland, and of a vast multitude beyond it, into two hostile camps—her admirers and contemners. And despite all that has been written on the one side and the other, diversity of opinion in regard alike to her political ambitions and moral character was perhaps never more pronounced than it is at the present day. The reasons for this are no doubt various. There is much that is elusive and incomprehensible in the personality even of the most ordinary mortals, and in the case of one whose nature was so subtle, complex, and many-sided the difficulty of forming a comprehensive and well-balanced judgment is proportionally increased. How far her sins and shortcomings were attributable to her own inclination and will, or to what extent they were the result of the malignant influences of the age in which she lived and of the evil counsels of the men

who stood around her throne, are questions to which widely different answers will be given. But whatever may be said in regard to such matters, there can be no question as to the perennial fascination of her personality and life.

The particular episode in the life of Queen Mary which Mr Ballantyne in the following pages has endeavoured to delineate, may be said to have a special interest for Borderers. The visit of the Queen to Jedburgh to attend a "Justice Ayre" is invested, owing especially to its sequel, with a more than ordinary interest. Her object in coming to this ancient Border burgh was to strengthen the hands of the local administration in dealing with the grave disorders which had long prevailed in this part of the country. From the time of Edward First down to the Union of the Crowns, and even later, the Borders had been in a state of turmoil and unrest. The government of the district was almost entirely in the hands of the local chiefs, who, in too many cases, fostered the lawless spirit of their respective clans for the promotion of their own selfish interests. The Scottish Parliament found itself almost helpless in dealing with this state of affairs. As the celebrated George Buchanan once facetiously remarked—"There was one Act much needed in Scotland, and that was an Act to bring the others into operation." The Scots harried the English, and the English never lost an opportunity of retaliating, and thus the mimic warfare went merrily on from generation to generation.

But about the middle of the sixteenth century a desire had sprung up on both sides of the Border to suppress, and, if possible, eradicate the lawless tendencies which had hitherto been in the ascendant. James V. had no sooner snatched the reins of Government from the hands of Angus than he turned his attention to the Border chiefs. Cockburn of Henderland, and that "menseless thief,"

*Adam Scott of Tushielaw, were adjudged worthy of death, and had their heads "stuck on the Tolbooth as a warning to others," and not a few of the most prominent men in the Border counties were cast into prison. But the zeal of the youthful King can hardly be said to have been tempered with discretion. He decoyed Armstrong of Gilnockie to Carlinrig on the Teviot, and ruthlessly put him and his brave followers to death. It was a foul deed foully done, and the result was in many respects disastrous. But in course of time, owing to the combined action of a variety of causes, economic, political, and religious, the lawless Borderers were brought under control, and consequently, at the time of Queen Mary's visit to Jedburgh, to quote an eminent authority—"Such marauding as there was took gradually the shape of individual robbery rather than warfare. . . . Thus it befell that while the mosstrooper race retained their old instincts, the pursuit of them was falling from its old position as a policy down to a crime against society. The descendants of those who had carried out a policy against a national enemy, or arrived at the establishment of a separate power between two hostile kingdoms, were becoming vulgar thieves and robbers."**

For many years the Scottish border was placed under the control of three wardens, the areas over which they exercised jurisdiction being known as the East, Middle, and West Wardensries. But the Earl of Bothwell—a name of evil omen—had got the triple wardenship, a most lucrative office; and to add still further to his emoluments he had been endowed with the Abbacy of Melrose and the Priory domains of Haddington. He occupied the Castle of Hermitage—a place of great strength

* *Burton's Hist. of Scotland, Vol. IV., p. 166.*

and antiquity ; one of the oldest baronial buildings in Scotland—situated on the Hermitage water, about five miles from Newcastle-on-Tyne, and some eight or nine miles from the English border. He was residing here in 1566, when Queen Mary, escorted by some of the members of her court, rode over from Jedburgh to see him. The distance between the two places is not less than twenty miles, and in those days, owing to the absence of roads, the difficulty of accomplishing such a journey in a single day must have been considerable. But Bothwell was a prime favourite with the Queen. That he should have gained such a high place in her esteem and affection is difficult to account for. Tradition affirms that he was ill-favoured, and as to his character, it could hardly have been worse. Buchanan speaks of him as “like an ape.” Be this as it may, he was certainly one of the most heartily detested men of his age, and subsequent investigation has only tended to strengthen the opinion that the feeling with which he was regarded by his contemporaries was well grounded. Bedford declares that “he is as naughty a man as liveth,” a remark which the great majority of his contemporaries would heartily endorse. The Queen’s affection for him, unnatural though it may seem, is not altogether unaccountable. “Mary was evidently one of those to whom at times—and to her the times were apt to come in quick succession—a great affair of the heart is a necessity of life ; the necessity now increased in intensity by her utter disappointment in her last attachment, and the loathing she entertained towards its object. Who, then, were near her to be the first refuge for her fugitive affections ? None but her own nobles, for she was not in a position to treat with a foreign prince ; and in looking round among the most eminent of these, including Huntley, the brother of a former suitor, Argyle, Athol, and Arran, there were none who, on the

ground of rank and position, had claims much higher than Bothwell's, unless it might be Arran, by reason of his royal blood, and he was already a rejected suitor. In personal qualifications Bothwell was infinitely above them all. He had a genius for command, with a dash of the chivalrous, which made Throekmorton describe him to Queen Elizabeth in 1560 as "a glorious, rash, and hazardous young man." *

It was when collecting offenders for the great court to be held at Jedburgh, and which the Queen was to grace by her presence, that Bothwell was dangerously wounded in a fierce encounter with John Elliot of the Park—the little Jock Elliot of Border song. He had been in pursuit of a party of Elliots—one of the most turbulent of the Border clans, who were specially wanted at this particular time in order to account for their misdeeds—and getting somewhat in advance of his company, he suddenly encountered this famous mosstrooper, and, drawing a "dag" or pistol, fired at him, wounding him severely in the thigh. Elliot, who wielded a two-handed sword with great dexterity, rushed upon his assailant, and bore him to the ground, leaving him for dead. And it might have been well for the country, as well as the unfortunate Queen, had Bothwell succumbed to his wounds. But he was reserved for another and a worse fate. He was exiled from his country, and miserably perished in a foreign prison—a doom he richly merited.

Hearing that Bothwell had been seriously wounded, Mary determined to pay him a visit. Nearly the whole day was spent in riding to and from Hermitage. She had only two hours to spend by the bedside of her favourite. The physical and nervous strain which this visit entailed was too much for

* Burton's Hist., Vol. IV., p. 173.

her delicate constitution, and the result was that when she returned to Jedburgh she was seized with a violent fever, and for some days she lay hovering on the brink of death. No one ever expected her recovery, and the Queen herself seemed to have little or no desire to live. But the end was not yet. Fotheringay still lay far in the distance. The cup of her misery was not yet full.

With what insight and skill Mr Ballantyne has described this episode in the life of the beautiful but ill-fated Queen we must leave the readers of his poem to judge.

Yarrow, October, 1907.

R. BORLAND.

PART I.

THE REIVER.

O'er the smiling homestead,
O'er the garnered fields,
Shines the sunlight pleasantly
On what the harvest yields.
Every sheaf is gathered,
Brought and stacked with skill.
Safe at last, 'gainst stormy blasts,
So come they when they will.
Safely from the hill-lands
10 To the nearer plain
Have the fleecy flocks been brought
To clip, and freed again.
In the pens the cattle,
In the stalls the steeds,
In the cellars food, a store
To suit their winter needs.
From the daily toiling,
From the moss and fen,
Round the cheery ingle gather
20 Parents, maids, and men.
In their hearts contentment,
In their bosoms peace.
As with thankfulness they watch
Their plenishing increase.

Ho ! pile on the faggots,
And rouse up the flame :
The wind from the Solway's
Not lazy, nor lame.
It scorns the limits
30 Of poor man's decrees,
As it rattles the windows,
And bends the tall trees.
On ! on ! in its fury,
It laughs at the strong,

- And scatters destruction
 Its pathway along.
 No forest too mighty,
 To stem its wild wrath,
 No floweret too small
 To o'erlook in its path.
 40 But here in our ingle,
 The faggots ablaze,
 We smile at its fury,
 And heed not its ways.
 So, on with the story,
 The jest, and the song,
 The day has been short,
 And the night will be long.
 While day brings its sorrow,
 50 While night brings its rest,
 The hour, as they mingle,
 Is sweetest and best,
 When twilight and gloaming
 Flit past like a dream,
 Life's heaviest sorrows
 But passing clouds seem.
- There's an ominous silence,
 A weird, ruddy gleam,
 The shot of a pistol,
 60 An oath, and a scream.
 The house is surrounded,
 The stacks are on fire,
 And the cattle stampede
 Thro' the smoke and the mire,
 The door is in splinters—
 In vain was its strength—
 Then shouts, and a struggle,
 With stillness at length,
 Save the sobs of the daughters,
 70 The groans of the sons—
 For the parents lie dead
 'Neath the murderous guns—
 And the brave, wounded youths
 Are bound fast to a tree,
 While the wild reivers laugh
 In their devilish glee,
 As, burning the homestead,
 The food, and the grain,

- And leaving the dead,
 80 They seek darkness again.
 Each a maid at his saddle
 More dead than alive,
 While horses and cattle
 All northward they drive.
 And the reiver will boast,
 In full many a tale,
 Of his feats when he harried
 The fair Edendale.
- O'er the blackened homestead
 90 And deserted hill,
 Float the circling wreaths of smoke
 From embers smouldering still.

 Every sheaf is useless,
 Every stack a pyre,
 For the storm that smote it was
 The lawless reiver's fire.
- O'er the weary moorland,
 Like a wail of pain,
 100 Bleats the fleecy mother's call.
 Seeking her lamb again.
- Not a pen is standing,
 Not a stall is seen,
 Naught remains but charred poles,
 Where plenty once had been.
- 'Neath the near trees, blackened
 By the smoke and grime,
 Bound forms are seen. Aye! some are dead.
 But others *Bide Their Time*.
- Scarce had the dawn of day dispelled
 110 The shades of drowsy night.
 Scarce had the morning mists been quelled
 And faded from the sight,
 When, on the startled morning air,
 Reverberating round
 Was heard the penetrating blare
 Of trumpet's brazen sound.

- At Jeddart's ancient Mercat Cross, (Note A.)
 By order of the bailie,
 To send the soldiers o'er the moss,
 120 Was sounded the *reveille*.
 Scarce had its echoes died away,
 And scarcely did they wait,
 Ere, in undress and disarray,
 Came from the castle gate
 The soldiers, first in twos and threes,
 And then, from everywhere
 In troops, like swarming hive of bees,
 They flocked into the square.
- Behind the trumpeters, alone,
 130 A knight, in very deed,
 Sat Bothwell, still as carved stone,
 Upon his sable steed.
 No word he spoke, no sign he gave
 To this, his mustering band,
 Until the bailie came to crave
 The parchment in his hand.
 Then woke he from his reverie,
 Sprang lightly to the ground,
 Threw "Satan's" rein to Beverley, (Note B.)
 140 And gazed intently round.
 The soldiers saw his quest'ning look,
 Which brought his captains near,
 And, when a higher stance he took,
 They crowded round to hear.
 In simple, manly tones he told
 To all who gathered there,
 "The Queen was hast'ning south, to hold
 A Border 'Justice Ayre'; (Note C.)
 And called on him, as warden chief,
 150 To justice without fail
 To bring each reiving lord or thief,
 And lodge in Jeddart Jail (Note D.)
 Against her coming, that she might
 In person judge each claim,
 And unto each do only right,
 Nor favour rank nor name.
 For rich and poor alike for long
 Had been the reiver's quarry,
 What Armstrong left with all his throng
 160 Did Elliot burn and harry.

So, quick prepare, with trusty guide,
Each man in coat of mail;
Two hundred lances soon must ride
With me to Liddesdale."

- With lusty cheer, the men replied,
Well pleased his guard to be,
And not a man but would have died
For such a chief as he.
No castle-moat too deep and wide,
170 No barricade too strong,
But they would win the other side,
Nor ask if right or wrong.
No castle-gate too strongly barred,
No tower too broad or high,
For these grim warriors, battle-scarred,
To face, with Bothwell nigh.
Crime 'neath no tangled web could hide,
That they would not unravel.
If only Bothwell led, they'd ride
180 With him to fight the devil.
So now, they eagerly dispersed,
These warriors rough, but true,
Each striving that he might be first
Back to the rendezvous.
Each horse must first be groomed and dressed,
Booted and spurred each man,
And, in its rest, each lance be pressed,
Before the "ride" began. (Note E.)
Lord Bothwell watched them as they hied,
190 All eager for the fray,
And thought what might perchance betide,
Before the close of day.

The bugle is sounding,
The horsemen are bounding
To saddle, with helmet and lance,
And o'er the wild heather,
In bright autumn weather,
The gay, mettled coursers advance.

- 200 Thro' bush, and thro' briar,
Thro' marsh, and thro' mire,
With laughter, with jest, and with song,

Each gay cavalier,
His heart void of fear,
Thinks not the way weary or long.

The Dunion is past,
At Minto the blast
Of the bugle awakes all around,
The echoes reply,
From earth, e'en to sky,
210 Repeating its bright silv'ry sound.

Across the Auld Brig,
By Moat, and Slitrig,
They clattered along with a will.
By Priestthaugh and Penchrise,
And Maiden's Pap rise,
And slough, near the wild Great-moor-hill.

They clambered the height,
Then burst on the sight
220 The theme of full many a tale
By minstrel and sage,
'Twas grim Hermitage,
The guardian of fair Liddesdale.

On, on with a cheer,
The horsemen career,
O'er bracken and heather they race.
Their shouts quickly drew
A re-echoed halloo
In the midst of this run-away chase.

But now 'mong the hills
230 The bugle sound thrills,
And calls them to order again.
And each mettled steed
Is curbed, at his need,
As they canter by streamlet and plain.

Now close by the gates,
The cavalcade waits
Ere the grim castle's drawbridge can fall.
And the warder looks down
On the soldiers from town,
240 Sent to hold the wild reivers in thrall.



HERMITAGE CASTLE.

From "Guide Book to Hermitage Castle," published by Messrs W. & J. Kenney, Hawick.

Ho ! warder ! open wide your gates,
 For here the Earl Bothwell waits
 To enter, by the Queen's command,
 And from this keep, with iron hand,
 To succour honest priest or layman,
 But hang all thieves as high as Haman.
 So, sling your drawbridge. Open, warder,
 To Mary's "Warden of the Border."

(Note F.)

- 256 Bold Hermitage ! In Soulis' days,
 Thy stony heart withstood the blaze
 Of many a burning faggot brand,
 Thrown in thy midst by English hand.
 Oft have thy battlements withstood
 The furious charge. And alien blood
 Has mingled with the waters deep
 That filled thy moat, in sullen sleep
 Engulfing, ere his life had fled,
 The foe, whose blood had tinged them red.
 Oft have thy walls, in silent pride,
 260 The shock of battle turned aside ;
 And frowned in anger, or in pain,
 On prostrate foemen on the plain.
 While, in the fierceness of thine ire,
 On coming hosts a hail of fire
 Has launched from turret and from cell
 As awful as the blasts of Hell.
 But now, 'tis not an alien calls
 For entrance to thine ancient halls !
 'Tis not a foeman in disguise,
 270 That seeks to conquer by surprise.
 'Tis not the shock of men and horse,
 That fain thy walls would storm by force.
 'Tis not a spy, in friendly dress,
 To test thy unpreparedness.
 'Tis but a soldier, come to brave
 The reiver's power, the poor to save.
 'Tis but a knight, in Lincoln green,
 Sent to defend thee, by his Queen.

(Note G.)

- 280 Each couch for the rider,
 Each stall for his steed—
 And neither were wider
 Nor longer than need—

Was fixed, as he entered
 The portal and yard.
 While interest was centred
 In soldier and guard.
 And soon round the board,
 In the banqueting hall,
 Was the health of their lord
 290 Drunk with cheers by them all.
 Then off to his leisure
 The soldier was sent,
 To rest, or to pleasure,
 He followed his bent.
 Who knew but the morrow
 Might witness the fray?
 Then banish all sorrow,
 At least for the day!
 Enough for the present,
 300 To take fortune's swing,
 The dull with the pleasant,
 Whate'er it might bring.

Lord Bothwell sat dreaming
 Alone in the tower,
 The autumn sun gleaming
 On streamlet and flower.
 He saw the cloud shadow
 Creep over the plain,
 By woodland and meadow,
 310 Ascending again
 The wild, barren mountain,
 And there gently die,
 Like drops from a fountain,
 Thrown up in the sky.
 He saw the stream wander
 Its bright, shining way,
 And gently meander
 By hillock and brae;
 The sunbeams had faded,
 320 And darker had grown
 The woods, many-shaded
 In russet and brown.
 His eye sought the valley,
 Where, deep in its shade,
 Full many a rally
 The reivers had made,

- Defying all order,
 By word and by deed,
 And ruling the Border
 330 From Liddle to Tweed.
 The threats they had vaunted
 Sent clouds to his brow;
 If e'er strength was wanted,
 It surely was now!
 He roused, and descended,
 Unheard, and unseen,
 Alone, unattended,
 His movements to screen.
 Like shadow he glided
 340 Thro' vault and thro' hall,
 And quickly decided
 The drawbridge should fall,
 So, raise the portcullis,
 And open the gate,
 The strength of Lord Soulis
 On Bothwell must wait. (Note E.)
- "Beware! my lord!" the warder cried,
 When o'er the drawbridge Bothwell hied
 Alone, unarmed, save for the brand
 350 That hung suspended by his hand,
 Nor coat of mail, nor cap of steel,
 Did stalwart frame or head conceal,
 But, in his coat of Lincoln green,
 Which shewed the badge of Scotland's Queen,
 And worsted cap, which brought to view
 His glossy curls of raven hue,
 And, with his manly, martial stride,
 His favourite spaniel by his side,
 He crossed the moat. "Beware, my lord!"
 360 The warder gave his warning word,
 "The hour-glass has but twice reversed,
 Since, riding of his train the first,
 Bold Armstrong passed, defying fate, (Note I.)
 With twoscore men, our castle-gate.
 And, with his reiver's flag unfurled,
 Defiance at our towers he hurled.
 With mighty oaths the Queen he mocked,
 And on your lordship's name invoked
 Disasters dire. Then, donning wig,
 370 Held mimic court on Nine-stane-rig. (Note J.)

- And thus reviled, in wild disorder,
 Thee, Warden of our Scottish Border.
 Enraged, we set the culverin,
 Which sent a shot among his men,
 And, ere the smoke had cleared, the blow
 Had laid five of his troopers low.
 The curses then were loud and long,
 The vengeance promised swift and strong.
 While, as they parted, in their rage
 They vowed their worst on Hermitage.
 And, if of old I know their ways,
 'Twill question be of hours, not days.
 They will, before the sun, return
 To ravage, harry, waste and burn
 I pray thee, therefore, double watol
 On gate and wall, their wit to match,
 And stay thou in thy guarded tower,
 To guide us in the battle hour."
- 380 Then Bothwell smiled his grim, dark smile,
 And sniffed the rising gale the while,
 Like bloodhound, knowing well his worth.
 Seeking the trail : to run to earth
 His quarry : hidden though he cower,
 He 'scapes not from the mastiff's power.
 He sniffed the gale, and gazed around,
 As tho' to search th' unequal ground,
 Watching for movement, high and low,
 To indicate an ambushed foe.
 Then, minding not the warder's fear,
 400 He climbed a hillock lying near,
 And shading, with his hand, his eyes,
 Scanned the hill summits, 'gainst the skies,
 And sought in every bush and tree,
 For traces of an enemy.
- The land was still : no life was seen,
 Nor movement, save the waving green
 Of trees low bending to the gale,
 Which moaned, and swept the lonely vale.
 Then, yielding to his venturous mood,
 410 Lord Bothwell sought a neighbouring wood.
 For had he not to shield from harm,
 Hung round his neck, Queen Mary's charm ?
 And would it e'er be told in song
 A Hepburn feared an Armstrong ?

The thought sent to his sun-tanned brow
 A surging flood. He felt that now
 If e'er he was his Queen to serve,
 It called for courage, strength, and nerve,
 A cunning mind, an iron hand,
 420 To rid him of this reiving band,

With quick descent he left his post,
 And soon the rivulet had crossed,
 That wound its laughing, silv'ry way
 Around the hill unceasingly.
 Then, as he climbed the further bank,
 Where thorns and underwood grew rank,
 He listened. Was it hoot of owl
 That caused the spaniel's angry growl?
 Or was it fox, on yonder hill,
 430 That made him stand alert and still?
 A backward glance Lord Bothwell threw,
 And saw that, hidden from his view,
 Behind some rocks, all grey with age,
 Just out of sight, was Hermitage.
 With cautious step, and anxious gaze,
 He sought to penetrate the maze
 Of shrubs that grew so thickly round,
 As almost to obscure the ground.
 Then, as he reached a hidden glade,
 440 By drooping alder branches made,
 He crouched, and, more secure to hide,
 Held fast the spaniel by his side.
 With listening ear he forward leant,
 His mind and eye attentive bent,
 While, ever and anon, his hand
 Gripped hilt or scabbard of his brand.
 The dog ceased not to twist and strain,
 That he his liberty might gain,
 But, held secure, the utmost length
 450 His leash would stretch o'ertaxed his strength,
 So, tired at length, and nothing seen,
 He sat, with ears alert and keen,
 At Bothwell's side, to seize, prepared,
 The first intruder that appeared.

But why this watching, this alarm?
 No sounds but of a gathering storm.

No movement but the rising breeze
 Stripping the dead leaves from the trees.
 The shriek of lapwing, plover's call,
 Nor sound more deep than chestnut's fall
 460 Disturbed the watcher. Yet he felt
 Instinctive danger, as he knelt,
 And though unheard, unknown, unseen,
 The fading woods still lingering green
 Sheltered, beneath its leafy shades,
 Some foeman, in its secret glades.
 Thus Bothwell waited, void of fear.
 For though unseen, he *felt* them near.

An hour sped on. The autumn sun
 470 Had long his slow descent begun.
 The shadows of the dying day
 Had lengthened out to deepening grey.
 The spaniel slept, and to a tree
 Was leashed, his master's hands to free.
 But still his watch Lord Bothwell kept,
 And to a vantage mound had crept,
 Whence, for a wide expanse, his view
 Could watch the streamlet surging through
 The peaceful valley, stage by stage,
 480 To join the river Hermitage.

But hark ! amid the sighing trees,
 Borne onward by the rising breeze,
 What was it smote the watcher's ear,
 Strained to its uttermost to hear ?
 The sound of voices ! Could it be
 Some soldier from the keep, to see
 Why stayed his lord so long away,
 Or sent to seek him, lest he stray ?
 Or would it not—more likely chance—
 490 Be troopers, knights of that "free-lance,"
 The fierce Armstrong, of Border fame ?
 Perchance e'en on his track they came !
 From Bothwell's eyes gleamed deadly hate ;
 Was this at last to be his fate ?
 Midst thieves and reivers, in a brawl,
 Must proud Queen Mary's Warden fall ?
 What chance had he, if blows were rife,
 Midst half-a-score, to keep his life ?

500 To fight a crowd he scarce was fit,
 But—could he match them by his wit?
 For often "force" has given way,
 And "cunning" won th' unequal fray!

He slips his kerchief, quickly ties
 It round the spaniel's mouth and eyes,
 That so the dog might not betray
 The place where his loved master lay.
 Then pulling tight his leathern belt,
 That sword stuck not to sheath he felt,
 And swinging round its silken band,
 510 He held it ready to his hand.
 Intent, within his hidden nook,
 He watched the progress of the brook,
 As nearer, with each spoken word,
 The voices seemed. At length he heard
 His name upon the stranger's tongue,
 And vile reproaches on it flung,
 As, round the streamlet's opening way,
 Three men appeared, in Lowland grey,
 And sauntered down its channel deep,
 520 Concealed from yonder armed keep.

Three men! three chieftains, Border-bred,
 In strength of arm, and poise of head
 Unequalled; in the game or fight
 Foremost of all; 'gainst king or knight
 Alert, audacious, proud and brave.
 Each held his castle by his glaive.
 Each had his troopers, each his rights
 Of reiving on the English wights.
 And woe betide the feu that dared
 Refuse demands, when they appeared.
 530 Full many a homestead, fair at night,
 Was blackened heap ere morning light.
 Naught could withstand their fearless raids,
 Nor sweep of their unerring blades,
 Three men of purpose, fire, and skill,
 With strength to do, and brain to will.

Did Bothwell tremble in his bower,
 To think, if once within their power,
 No dungeon built too dark, too drear,
 No torture known be too severe,

540 No death too terrible, to wreak
 On him, who sought their power to break,
 As, hidden, that dull autumn day,
 He watched their movements, as he lay ?
 No ! danger to his Scottish heart
 Might make the life-blood thrill and start,
 Might raise excitement, flush his brow,
 —As oft before, it did it now—
 Might nerve his arm ! might swell his pride,
 Might brush all other thoughts aside,
 550 But danger passed, or danger came,
 Of fear he only knew the name.

Three stalwart chiefs, these Border men,
 Unmatched in any Highland glen
 For breadth of chest, or strength, or speed,
 And brethren in this hour of need.
 For common danger brought them near,
 Discussing what each had to fear
 From Bothwell's visit to the Border,
 To quell their raids and wild disorder,

560 The youngest of the three advised
 Submission, as their lives they prized.
 " They still had lands, retainers, food,
 Fish from the stream, game from the wood.
 Their castles, power of death and life,
 With England near, when raids were rife.
 Let's give our oath, say I for one."
 Quoth Armstrong chief of Mangerton. (*Note K.*)

Then spake the eldest, swarthy, dark,
 The sullen Elliot of Park.
 570 " If I submit, 'tis but to see
 How far submission pleases me.
 For, if no benefits I'm finding,
 The oath I will not hold as binding
 And only will I play the part,
 To plunge my sword in Bothwell's heart."

The other silent stood awhile,
 As though the two to reconcile.
 Then, in his bluff and surly way,,
 He vowed defiance, night and day.

- 580 "No quarter to the soldier given.
 No hope for earth; no priest for heaven;
 No plot too vile, no scheme too low,
 No life too young, no death too slow,
 Extermination! fire, and sword,"
 Was to his mouth the sweetest word.
 Thus Armstrong vowed to shew his power,
 As chieftain of Gilnockie Tower.
- 590 And as he spoke, dark Elliot's ire
 Gleamed in his eyes, a hidden fire,
 For Mangerton must join the ring,
 Or be for ever "niddering."
 Then vowed they all a vengeance deep,
 A hate that would not die, nor sleep.
 And in their lust and crafty rage,
 They shook their fists t'ward Hermitage,
 So little did they dream that heard
 Was every angry, 'vengeful word
 By him they all had vowed to slay
- 600 In cold blood, or by treachery.
- It now remained that lots be cast
 Who should mount guard till night be past,
 And watch when best they might engage
 The garrison in Hermitage.
 The dice was thrown, and chance's power
 Chose Armstrong, of Gilnockie Tower.
 They parted then, prepared to stand
 Each by his vow, on every hand,
 For he who first betrayed a friend
- 610 Would meet a craven traitor's end,
- Gilnockie saw them through the glen,
 And bade them both speed back again,
 Bringing their troopers, one and all,
 To see the upstart Bothwell's fall.
 He watched them climb a neighbouring height,
 And gazed till both were out of sight;
 Then slowly turned, and made his way
 Till close to where Lord Bothwell lay.
 The Earl had learned the chieftains' mind,
- 620 Had seen Gilnockie left behind,
 Had heard their plans, and knew the force
 Arrayed against him, men and horse.
 And lo! the chieftain most to fear
 Was, single-handed, drawing near,

Why should he not by one fell blow
 Lay this defiant reiver low ?
 It seemed as though a smiling Fate
 Had led him to his castle-gate.
 His mind made up, his wit forebore
 To let him pass, but nothing more,
 Then, springing from his covert shade
 He grasped Gilnockie's Lowland plaid.

With iron grip he swung him round,
 Then tripped and threw him to the ground,
 But ere he fell, round Bothwell's limb
 He threw an arm, and down with him
 Dragged Mary's champion. Foe to foe,
 Bothwell above, the thief below.
 Then, rolling down the streamlet's side,
 Their struggles stemmed its tiny tide.
 They panted, strained, and, face to face,
 Were locked in such a fierce embrace
 That neither felt the other's rage,
 Nor yet himself could disengage.
 In vain did Bothwell seek to use
 Each feint of war, or wrestling ruse.
 For what Gilnockie lacked in skill,
 Was more than gained by strength and will.
 But, just as vain, his strength he strained,
 He not a point on Bothwell gained ;
 His iron muscles, knotted hard,
 Could naught avail 'gainst Hepburn's guard,
 And thus they strove. So strange a fight
 Was never waged by serf or knight.

They stemmed the little streamlet's way,
 Till in a muddy pool they lay.
 While higher rose its yellow tide,
 As in its bed, they vainly tried,
 With every muscle called in play,
 Each one to gain the mastery.
 Lord Bothwell's coat, amid the briar,
 Riven and torn, was smeared with mire.
 While Armstrong's plain and homespun grey
 Was covered with the sodden clay.
 Still Bothwell kept above his foe,
 Until the streamlet water's flow



GILNOCKIE TOWER.

- 670 Had all but reached the reiver's face,
 As vain he tried to shift his place.
 'Twas then he guessed Lord Bothwell's plan—
 To hold him till the water ran
 Just high enough to catch his breath,
 And thus to bring about his death—
 The thought revived his mighty power,
 Full needed in this awful hour.
 Redoubled now, in wild alarm,
 Was strained his strength to free an arm,
 Or Bothwell's clasp to force, alone,
 Yet dared he not release his own.
- 680 Vainly he tried; he still could feel
 That Bothwell held with hands of steel.
 As higher yet the waters came—
 They caught his breath—his mighty frame
 Shook, as a choking gasp he made,
 And thus to Bothwell's hands he played,
 For quick as thought, his arm was free,
 Then pressing, with his weight, his knee,
 With sudden jerk, his hand he brought
 And gripped the reiver by the throat.
- 690 If vain his strength when equal lay
 His chances of success that day,
 How useless, in this fatal hour,
 When lying in his enemy's power,
 Half-choked, half-drowned, half-dead, what hope
 His strength could now with Bothwell's cope.
 And, with his hopes, soon ebb'd away
 His senses, as he powerless lay.
 Limp and inert, his mighty arm
 Fell at his side. His power to harm
 Had ceased, and with his Border sway,
- 700 Bold Armstrong there had swooned away.
- When Bothwell saw that sense had fled,
 He raised the gallant trooper's head
 From out the ebbing streamlet's tide,
 And dragged him to its heath-clad side.
 But, ere for help he went to look,
 From out the reiver's belt he took
 The brace of pistols which he bore
 And into shreds his plaid he tore,

710 And bound him, hands and feet secure
 To make his capture doubly sure,
 Till he could send a troop of men
 With litter to this lonely glen,
 To guard the great Gilnockie sage,
 And bring him safe to Hermitage.

He sought, once more, his hiding-place,
 A smile upon his handsome face.
 Unwound his 'kerchief, from the tree
 Unleashed and set his spaniel free.
 At last, in happiness complete,
 720 He gamboll'd round his master's feet.
 Then, barking in his joyous glee,
 He scampered off, at liberty.
 With quickened step, Lord Bothwell sped
 Along a beaten track which led
 Up to the drawbridge and the moat.
 He heard the warder's bugle note,
 Announcing that some stranger, late,
 Sought entrance at the castle gate.
 Then Bothwell smiled. His coat in rags,
 730 With remnants fluttering round like flags,
 His whole attire besmeared with clay—
 Such contrast since he went away—
 No wonder that the warder's sight
 Deceived him, in his master's plight;
 And only, when he saw his face
 Close to the drawbridge landing-place,
 With spaniel racing through the brake,
 Was he convinced of his mistake.
 Then clanging down the drawbridge fell,
 740 As from the tower the vesper-bell
 Proclaimed, amid the rising gale,
 The hour of prayer to Liddesdale.

The soldiers crowded round to hear
 Lord Bothwell's tale, and cheer on cheer
 Uprose amid the anxious throng
 That he had conquered Armstrong.
 Then quick, from court-yard, hall, and cell,
 They hurried to the wooded dell,
 750 Where lay Gilnockie, blind with rage,
 And straining hard to disengage

His arms, and feet, and bleeding hands
 From Bothwell's ever-tightening bands.
 But soon, in captive led, was he
 Who bade his troopers come to see
 The fall of him who proudly bore
 Him through his gate, a prisoner.

760 Bold Armstrong there, at break of day,
 Alone, defenceless, harmless, lay.
 A beaten chief ! O thought of scorn !
 He cursed the day that he was born.
 By Bothwell too ! that roving knight.
 By guile, perchance, but, too, by might,
 Ne'er since with Douglas had he strained
 So hard, and yet so little gained :
 Aye ! up till yesternight, not twice
 Had he been held in such a vice.
 Nor had he e'er, by mortal man,
 Been held a prisoner, 'gainst his clan.
 770 What of his clan ? How would he dare
 Return and in their dangers share,
 When he, their chief, in single fight,
 Was conquered by a courtier knight ?
 And oh ! the bitterness, the shame,
 That he, the head of all the name
 Of Armstrong, now could only speak
 Of arm subdued, of strong arm, weak.

780 The storm had passed. The day broke fair
 O'er heather brown and moorland bare.
 And, in the shelter of the glen,
 There waited nigh two hundred men.
 Two hundred reivers, stout of limb,
 Who knew not fear. In silence grim
 They waited for the battle-gage,
 When they would rush on Hermitage.
 They waited long. No signal sound
 Awoke the slumbering echoes round,
 And none that saw the scene so drear,
 Would dream a living thing was near.
 790 At length a whispered breath was heard,
 So light, that neither beast nor bird
 Moved at its sound. It passed along
 The troopers—"Where was Armstrong ?"

Instinctive, in that silent glen,
 Each sought his neighbour's eye again,
 And questioned, leaning on his sword,
 Far more by look than spoken word.

But soon, like phantom, grim and dark,
 Crept sullen Elliot of Park,
 From 'mid that anxious, waiting throng,
 800 All silently, his way along
 The well-known valley. On his brow
 The thunder-cloud had settled now.
 And while in awe the reivers gazed,
 The light'ning from his dark eyes blazed,
 As, in his rage, he onward pressed,
 But yet so lightly, 'twas confessed
 Scarce twig he moved, or bough displaced.
 As, in his sullen, silent haste
 He muttered, vowing neath his breath
 810 To Armstrong swift and certain death,
 Should he have failed, thro' fault or sleep,
 His vigil and his watch to keep.

He crossed the river as it sped,
 By overhanging branches spread.
 Each bough was cover, every tree
 Could screen him from his enemy.
 At length, he reached the narrow glade
 Where Armstrong with himself had made
 Their vows of vengeance yesternight.
 820 But what was this? Saw he aright?
 Marks of a struggle? All around
 Shreds of a plaid lay on the ground.
 That well-known check could not belong
 To any but an Armstrong!
 Here lay a sword, and, strange to say,
 It still within its scabbard lay.
 The belt was broken: and the grass
 Around was trampled, tangled mass.
 Still stranger sight, upon a briar,
 830 Bedraggled in the sodden mire,
 The vestage of a coat was seen,
 Its tell-tale colour Lincoln green.

Then Elliot swore loud, deep, and long,
 With oaths, a mighty, venomous throng.

The imprecations of his rage
 Might have been heard at Hermitage,
 "They call thee chieftain—thee ? Armstrong !
 'Tis wonder thou hast been so long,
 Whose actions shew thee scarce a man,
 840 The head of this brave Border clan.
 What use was strength to thee, forsooth,
 When eye to eye, and tooth and tooth,
 Thou hast been conquered. Died the death
 Perchance, nor drew thy sword from sheath,
 By some paid hireling of the Queen,
 In livery of Lincoln green.
 Or, worse than death, mayhap ye lie
 In dungeon deep, or prison high !
 And wilt thou let them wring from thee
 860 The oath of our conspiracy ?
 I'd sooner slay thee by mine hand,
 Than see thee thus a craven stand.
 O ! fatal day for Border power,
 Thus menaced, in its evil hour,
 When Bothwell's talons are so long,
 That they can clutch an Armstrong.
 A different tale had been to tell
 Had I been left to watch the dell.
 No ill-paid traitor, soldier-knave,
 880 Would dare an Elliot to brave,
 Before upon that fading heath
 He lay my pointed sword beneath.
 No ambush, laid in light or dark,
 Traps wily Elliot of Park."

The words were scarcely spoken, when
 A whistle shrill rang through the glen,
 And scarce its echoes died away,
 Ere Elliot, struggling, foaming, lay.
 For, from the brushwood, eager sprang
 870 A group of soldiers, like the fang
 Shot from beneath a serpent's tongue,
 And on the luckless Elliot flung
 Themselves, all eager for a share
 Of honour such a capture bare.
 And shorter than it takes to tell,
 The boasting reiver ambushed fell
 Upon the heath and heather brown.
 A dozen soldiers held him down,

- 880 While Bothwell watched th' unequal fray,
 And smiled to see his foe's dismay.
 In vain he struggled, strained, and tore,
 The soldiers held him but the more,
 With every limb a prisoner there,
 His bosom heaved in grim despair,
 And as his rage-choked breaths he drew,
 The foulest epithets he knew,
 Were hurled at Bothwell :
 " Woman's knight !
 Is this the way thy gallants fight ?
 But twelve to one. Thou, out the way,
 890 Dost but the part of craven play.
 A looker-on, a carpet-knight,
 To masquerade fair dames at night.
 A wife-betrayer ! Wolf of hell ! (Note L.)
 I know thy dastard ways too well.
 Afraid to venture out 'mong men,
 Thou hidest in this lonely glen,
 Thine only hope to capture me,
 And this, of course, by treachery.
 Thy father fought the English ! Aye !
 900 And thou hast had thy little try
 And failed withal. Yet in these bounds
 Ye stole the Queen's three thousand pounds.
 Ye call us thieves ! maybe we are !
 But what of thee ? a greater far
 Than ever donned the reiver's plaid,
 Or lost his life in English raid.
 What harm to ride Northumberland,
 When oft the weight of Hereford's hand (Note M.)
 Has fall'n upon our native glen,
 910 And hunted us, like fox to den ?
 And yet thou comest—thou indeed !—
 To teach how we our lives should lead.
 We steal from foemen, break, or bend.
 Thou art the man who steals from friend.
 Queen Mary's smile has " turned thy tail,"
 And sent ye down to Liddesdale,
 With her sweet words, to search our glen,
 And take, than thou far better men
 By guile and treachery. Ye dare
 920 Not meet nor fight us honest, fair !
 But free mine hands, and, sword to sword,
 Come three to one, and test my word ! "

- Lord Bothwell's smile had died away,
 And fiercer passions came in play,
 As, 'neath the lash of Elliot's tongue,
 A burning rage his heartstrings wrung.
 And, in his eyes, grown dark the while,
 Gleamed hate. 'Twere hard to reconcile
 Men as implacable as those
 930 Whose rising passions quickly froze
 Whatever better feelings might
 Have tried the worse to put to flight.
 For neither, in his inner soul,
 Would exercise his self-control.
 So, in his heat and high-strung rage,
 Bothwell accepted Elliot's gage,
 And, with impassioned voice, declared
 He was for single fight prepared.
- 940 " Prate not of honour, nor of right,
 Thou sullen, craven-hearted wight.
 When raiding England, 'tis by day,
 And in an honourable way.
 With blade to blade and knight to knight
 We wage our war, and speed our fight.
 As for the bribe that Leicester sent, (*Note N.*)
 I own 'twas not to Knox it went,
 But not a crown—so much the worse—
 Ere found its way to Bothwell's purse.
 But some, they tell me, found an ark
 950 Of refuge in thy castle, Park !
 Aye ! sent thee, by some strange caprice
 Of our loved Queen, that thou the peace
 Should, on the Borders, make and keep.
 She little guessed thy purpose deep,
 To take an oath alone to see
 How its conditions suited thee,
 And only would'st thou play the part,
 To plunge thy blade into my heart.
 So, when I come to fight with thee,
 960 I match by wit thy treachery.
 Thou knewest not, when in this glade
 With Armstrong thou the compact made
 But yesternight, that I was near,
 And could not help myself but hear
 All that ye said. And, when alone
 Gilnockie came—for ye had gone—

I fought him in this brooklet's bed,
 And afterwards, a prisoner, led
 Him safe to Hermitage. I'll try
 Ere long to send him company."

970

Then to the soldiers as they bent
 O'er Elliot's prostrate form intent—
 "Release your prisoner; from the ground
 Upraise him; stand in ring around,
 To see that neither gets away,
 And guarantee us both fair-play,
 For, by my father's soul, I mean
 To let it be right fairly seen,
 If Mary's warden cannot fight
 And beat a Border reiver wight.
 So, Elliot! stand guard, I trow,
 Thou wilt not wait a second blow.
 For, as we ne'er will meet again,
 I mean to slay, or to be slain."

980

But Elliot's limbs were barely free,
 Ere from the heath exultingly
 He sprang, and, seizing firm his sword,
 Stood ready. Not a single word
 He spoke, but with his sullen look,
 Which shewed how little he could brook
 The opposition Bothwell made
 To his far-reaching, tempered blade,
 They closed. The Earl's keen, watchful eye
 Could gauge each pass his foe might try,
 For naught that Elliot feigned, or knew,
 Could mend his chance. More wroth he grew;
 While Bothwell, cool, and at his ease,
 Seemed but his sullen foe to tease,
 As, springing back, or to the side,
 Each lounge of Elliot's went wide.
 While he invoked his patron saint,
 And used the perry, pass, and feint.
 Then, as he saw the mocking smile
 Mount Bothwell's haughty brow the while,
 His dark, malignant temper rose
 To fever heat, for all his blows
 Were turned aside, and naught availed
 'Gainst Bothwell's guard, which never failed.

990

1000

1010 Then Elliot rushed upon his foe,
 Who sprang aside to ward the blow,
 But, 'mid the heath, a hidden root
 Of sturdy heather caught his foot,
 And in a trice he helpless lay
 Amid the bracken on the brae.

On Elliot rushed in blinded hate,
 He saw his foe's mishap too late.
 For in his eager, headstrong haste
 He tripped o'er Bothwell, as he braced
 His mighty arm for one fell blow,
 1020 To strike his active foeman low.
 The blow was spent, but, as it fell,
 It found a lodgment, all too well,
 In Bothwell's limb, as Elliot sped
 To fall; but ere the heath was red,
 Lord Bothwell, on his feet once more,
 Let Elliot rise, and e'en forbore
 To use the vantage he had gained,
 Ere Elliot to his feet attained.
 The warden's cheek was blanched with pain,
 1030 Before the reiver came again.
 Who, seeing blood upon his blade,
 Thanked fortune for the fall he made,
 And only wished his trusty dart
 Had found its way to Bothwell's heart,
 Whose bleeding limb now dyed the ground,
 And heath, and bracken all around.
 But he, unflinching, stood his guard,
 Nor shewed his pain by sign or word.
 While Elliot took new heart of grace,
 1040 Grim satisfaction in his face.

On came the reiver. Bothwell's sword
 No longer now was used as guard,
 For scarce the pair had closed again
 In earnest fight, upon the plain,
 Ere Elliot felt his trusty brand
 Was riven from his iron hand,
 And, like a flash of light, it sped
 Over a watching soldier's head,
 And noiseless fell, and hid beneath
 1050 The waving bracken and the heath.

When, quick as thought, Lord Bothwell pressed
 His vantage, and in Elliot's breast,
 With rapid thrust, his debt he paid,
 And buried to the hilt his blade.
 The reiver, with a gasp and cry,
 Fell backwards in his agony,
 And 'vengeful, even to the death,
 Cursed Bothwell with his dying breath.
 When he, his victory complete,
 Fell swooning at the reiver's feet.

(Note O.)

1060

Amazed one moment, on the green
 The soldiers saw th' unwonted scene,
 When conqueror and conquered lay
 Together, on the heath-clad brae.
 Then, running to their leader there,
 They raised him, and with tender care
 Bound up his wound, then of the plaid
 The reiver wore, a litter made,
 And laid him in its ample fold,
 While three on either side took hold,
 And carried him they loved so well
 From out that fatal, lonely dell.
 Ascending slow the brooklet's side,
 They gained the moorland, bleak and wide,
 Then gently forward made their way
 To Hermitage, dour, grim, and grey.
 While round the wounded Bothwell's brew,
 The breezes gently whispered now
 Of favour gained with Scotland's Queen,
 And dreams of duels won between.
 Then, as his raven looks aside
 Were blown, his eyes he opened wide,
 As though to question—was it true,
 Or dream in which he Elliot slew?
 Then as his senses gathered power,
 His wounded limb! the morning hour!
 The litter! Yes! his dream was true.
 He smiled, and closed his eyes anew.

1070

1080

But list! these murmurs 'mong the trees,
 Unlike the sound of brook or breeze!
 Hear ye the tramp that up the glen
 Resounds? Can it be armed men?

1090

Then quickly was the litter borne
 Towards the keep. While winding horn!
 Hastened the warder, by its call,
 To let his lumbering drawbridge fall.
 And just in time the warning sound
 Was given out, for to the ground
 It scarce had time to fall, before
 The litter reached the castle door.
 100 With eager haste the soldiers drew
 Around their chief, and hurried through
 The ample portals opened wide,
 The smallness of the guard to hide.
 The last to cross the bridge was one
 Who stayed to spy what might be done
 When Elliot was found, and dead;
 Their strength, and also he who led.

A band of reivers, twenty strong,
 1110 With stealthy step, the glade along
 Sought high and low, and danger spurned,
 To learn why Elliot ne'er returned.
 And led by John of Mangerton
 Last of the three, the only one,
 Who had not fallen by Bothwell's hand,
 And still might rule the Borderland.
 The soldier waited till they found
 Dark Elliot on the bloody ground.
 1120 He heard their cries of wild dismay,
 As, raising him right reverently,
 The glazing eyes and sunken head
 Proclaimed his sullen soul had fled.
 And there, the cause was seen confessed,
 A gaping sword-thrust in his breast;
 Then looking round, the soldier spied,
 As to the bridge he quickly hied,
 And ere he gained the beaten track,
 A dozen reivers at his back
 To intercept him tried in vain,
 As, racing o'er the grassy plain,
 1130 They dared not brave unerring fate,
 Within a bowshot of the gate.

Like charger, scenting from afar
 The dangers of the distant war,

Lord Bothwell roused, alert and keen,
 And asked the meaning of the scene.
 And scarcely was the story told,
 Ere he conceived a stroke so bold,
 Which would at once all wrongs redress,
 And leave the reivers leaderless.
 1140 "Send twenty men across the moat,
 But watch the reivers see them not,
 And hasten, hiding stage by stage,
 To where the brook joins Hermitage.
 Then, let them creep the brooklet's bed,
 Until they meet them with the dead,
 And hold them there, nor yield a yard,
 Till twenty others of the Guard
 Can, by the drawbridge pass, assail
 1150 Them in the rear, nor can they fail
 To bring them all, in order fair,
 Here to await the 'Justice Ayre.'
 Send forty more to guard the ground,
 In case of interference round,
 For nigh two hundred armed men
 Must hover near, in wood and glen;
 So, at the slightest sign of flight,
 Or hard resistance, wrong or right,
 Sound out the bugle, and I'll send
 1160 The garrison complete, to bend
 And break the bloody reivers' power,
 For this must be their final hour.
 Bring all ye can alive, but kill
 Those who to flee have power or will.
 Now speed ye ! speed ye ! valiant men,
 Bring hither all in yonder glen,
 And twenty guineas, fairly won,
 Is his, who brings me Mangerton !
 O ! cursed be Elliot's blundering blade,
 1170 That me a wounded soldier made,
 For where before was battle-play,
 And Bothwell absent from the fray ! "

The sunshine died, as tho' the gloom
 Around would mourn the reiver's doom.
 Grim silence—save the brooklet's song,
 As drowsily it crept along—
 Fell over all. The birds were still,
 And mist came down on wood and hill.

1180 While sadly, sullen, stalwart men
 Prepared to carry down the glen
 All that remained of him whose power
 Oft warded danger in the hour
 When desolation swept the vale,
 And ruin threatened Liddesdale.
 It could not be the love they bore
 To Elliot, made the death-pang sore.
 But while he lived their hopes were high
 That they were safe, howe'er might try
 1190 Earl Bothwell, with his levied force
 Of veterans, both men and horse.
 Nor Mary's ediot did they fear (Note P.)
 With Elliot and with Armstrong near.

Now, only Mangerton remained,
 And what experience he had gained
 Was under older, stronger men
 Than they dared hope to see again,
 E'er since Gilknockie disappeared.
 And tho' they still might hope, they feared
 1200 That some unkind, revengeful Fate
 Had lured him thro' its magic gate.
 And here was Elliot, chief of men !
 Who, but an hour since, in the glen
 Had left them, brave in heart and head,
 Now onward borne, inert and dead.
 Surely the luck which all along
 Befriended them, and made them strong
 To meet misfortune's fiercest blast,
 Forsook them, in their need, at last.
 Thus, slowly, mournfully, they made
 1210 Their way a-down the silent glade,
 While Elliot, chieftain of his race,
 Was in their 'midst—his rightful place—
 But borne aloft, with reverent care.
 Sad eyes were bent, bowed heads were bare.
 'Twas thus they mourned a leader slain,
 And formed his last sad funeral train.

But, as they moved, the sudden sound
 Of music filled the glen around.
 A hidden singer with her song
 1220 Awoke the echoes, sweet and long;

Now rising high in rapturous strain,
Then sinking to a weird refrain.
The cortege stopped, and, list'ning, stood
To hear this singer of the wood.

"O! sweet are the floo'rs i' the spring,
An' bonnie the glades an' the glens.
An' blythe are the birds, as they sing
Their sang to daft 'Nance-o'-the-Fens.

1230 "When bright is the sweet simmer sun,
I rest in the deep forest dens,
An' dream, till the gloamin', begun,
Tells its tale to daft 'Nance-o'-the-Fens.'

"I roam 'mang the woods an' the braes,
I hae corners that naebody kens,
An' I gather the hips an' the slaes
As they smile on daft 'Nance-o'-the-Fens.'

"When hail an' when snaw fa' aroon',
An' frosty wind bitterness len's,
It mak's but a break i' the tune
1240 Which is sung by daft 'Nance-o'-the-Fens.' "

"'Tis Nance the witch," a reiver said,
As down the brooklet's narrow bed
Their way again they took. 'Twas true,
For round a bend came into view
The singer. On a fallen beech
That blocked the path, and seemed to reach
Across the glen, she sat and sang,
While thro' the woods the echoes rang—
1250 A woman, middle-aged or more,
And almost weird the garb she wore;
While on her weather-beaten face
The lines of hardship they could trace.
Her grey elf-locks untidy hung
Her temples o'er; while round her flung
Was widow's cloak of sombre hue.
And tho' her voice was clear and true,
A wildness in her tones and eyes,
A look of startled, grim surprise,
Told the sad tale of memory tinged
1260 With distant wrongs, and mind unhinged.

Her singing ceased when they appeared,
 Not that she either cared or feared,
 But other dreams had laid their train,
 And seized her poor, bewildered brain,
 Which, as a kind of recompense,
 Retained some glimmerings of sense.
 And oft, indeed, 'twas hard to say
 Where her sere intellect gave way.
 1270 For, 'neath it all, a cunning train
 Ruled all her deeds. Time and again,
 She quickly made it manifest
 Which course would serve her int'rests best.
 So, as the rivers, sad and slow,
 Came near, she made as tho' to go,
 Then pausing, with uplifted hand,
 She bade the group of mourners stand.

"What hae ye on yer shouthers high?
 What bear ye thro' the glen?
 What gars ye bow yer heids, an' sigh?
 1280 What ails ye, bonnie men?
 It canna be an antlered roe,
 An' covered wi' a plaid,
 It canna be a wolf laid low,
 An' carried doon the glade.

"It canna be a stickit boar,
 Withoot a dog an' spear.
 It canna be the ewe he tore,
 Oot on the hillside drear.
 It canna be the feuar deid
 1290 Oothye, on Fernylea.
 For wha could streik, or lay his heid,
 Withoot the aid o' me?

"An' whaur is Airmstrong th' day,
 Or Elliot o' Park?
 They baith were here, sae blythe an' gay,
 Yestreen afore the dark.
 Gae, ask the hawk that hovers high
 Ower Hermitage, sae fair.
 Gae, ask the ravens as they fly,
 1300 Gin Airmstrong is there.

"Gae, ask the trees in mornin' licht,
 What sights they may hae seen.
 Gae, ask the name o' yon brave knight
 That wears the Lincoln green.
 Aye ! ask black Elliot back again
 To tread yon bloody lea.
 What hae ye there, my bonnie men ?
 I pray ye, let me see ? "

1310 "Peace, woman ! peace," quoth Mangerton,
 "For ne'er before did morning sun
 Shine on a sadder day. A wail
 Will rise ere night from Liddesdale.
 For he who was its strength and might,
 Its chief, and leader in the fight,
 Now lies a corse, and, as I feared,
 My cousin, too, has disappeared.
 The reiver's cause no longer thrives
 Bereft of these two noble lives.
 No strength can right the reiver's wrongs
 1320 Save Elliots or Armstrongs."

Nance rose, and stood her fullest height.
 The reivers faltered at the sight,
 And ere they slowly gathered round,
 They laid their burden on the ground.
 While she, her bony arm on high.
 Replied with queenly dignity,
 "Hear, Mangerton ! and dree my weird.
 O' Nance's tale nane need be fear'd.
 It tells alane o' ane wha's gane,
 1330 An' Nance's sel', wha's left alane.
 'Tis twenty years sin', 'mid the snaw.
 The reivers harried Edenha'.
 An' nineteen, come November's morn,
 Sin' Elliot's bairn an' mine was born,
 Nae wife was I. Nae broken ring
 Wi' my bit bairnie could I bring
 To shew the priest. An ootcast's wean.
 O ! weel I see that scene again.
 The empty kirk, the altar licht,
 1340 The only glimmer i' the nicht ;
 The white-haired priest, his searchin' look,
 When frae my breast the bairn I took.

His kindly words to my sad tale
 Hoo I was brocht to Liddesdale,
 He said, 'O Lord, how long, how long
 Must virtue bend beneath the strong ?'
 He blessed my bairn, an' wi' a prayer
 That bade me 'gang an' sin nae mair'
 He sent me forth, a mither still,
 1350 But purified in mind an' will.

The days flew past, my bairnie grew
 In stature, an' in beauty too.
 An' ilka hour increased the store
 O' little ways, ne'er seen before.
 Ae simmer nicht black Elliot came
 Up to the hut I'd made my hame.
 His broo was black as thunder cloud,
 His hands were clenched, he swore aloud,
 An' cursed the day when first his een
 1360 Baith Edenha' an' me had seen :
 He stormed an' raved, like ane bereft
 O' sense, an' vowed that ere he left
 He'd teach me hoo to prate an' pray
 To priest an' saint at Chapel-brae.
 In vain his wrath I tried t' appease,
 An' in a corner, on my knees,
 I crouched in terror. In alarm
 My bairn lay greetin' on my arm.
 Then, in a trice, an' ere I guessed
 1370 What devil's thought had seized his breast,
 He gripped me in his giant strength,
 An' tho' I screamed an' strove, at length
 He got my bairn—his bairn an' mine,
 I heard a scream, a gasp, a whine !
 An' tho' wi' lion's strength I foucht,
 My utmost power to his was nocht.
 Then prayin' to his better sel'
 I at his feet half-fainting fell,
 1380 When doon my bairnie, dead, he threw,
 An' frae the hut like arrow flew.

Ah ! but a moment to my breast
 Was that sweet bairn in terror pressed.
 But, at that moment, something brake
 Within my bosom, for its sake.

In vain my groans, my anguished cries,
 Nae ear could hear. But, in the skies,
 In Nance's book a vow was willed,
 An' this fair morn was it fulfilled.
 For Bothwell fought my bairnie's stre,
 1390 Avenged my wrong, an' quenched the fire
 That, ever since that awesome hour,
 Has surged my veins wi' fevered power.
 Aye! hand to hand, and blade to blade,
 Short work o' him Lord Bothwell made.
 For never since, save by a fa',
 Could Elliot blood frae Bothwell draw.
 Then, when they closed, black Elliot's sword
 Flew o'er his heid—on honour's word—
 An' barely backward could he start,
 1400 Ere Bothwell's blade was thro' his heart."

She faltered, leaning 'gainst a tree,
 As tho' o'ercome by memory.
 But, mastering, by force of will,
 Her passing weakness, with a thrill
 Of mystic power, her hand on high,
 She pointed upwards to the sky.
 With eyes ablaze, and heaving breast,
 Her other hand her bosom pressed.
 While, with a voice that higher rose
 1410 With every sentence, till it froze
 The very hearts of those who stood
 Around her, in that silent wood,
 She uttered her prophetic words;
 And, like a flight of driven swords,
 Resistless, unrelenting, true,
 They pierced their falling spirits thro',
 Until, from brave and hardened men,
 Unused to sentiment, the glen
 Held but a troop of heartless thieves
 1420 As spiritless as autumn leaves.

"Hear Madge's weird, ye arrant knaves.
 A hunner years has seen ye slaves—
 For weel the deevil kens his price—
 To passion, pride, an' every vice
 That ravages the heart o' man,
 An' mak's for misery an' ban.

- Hoo many mithers in the glen
 Has been to Gretna, dae ye ken ?
 Hoo many bairns can lift their een,
 Or daur at kirk or mass be seen ?
 Hoo many o' yersels can prove
 That he is no' a licht-o'-love ?
 An' yet ye moan a fa'in' power !
 An' yet ye dread a comin' hour !
 An' fain wad stem the risin' tide,
 Tho' Nature's laws ye cast aside !
 See'st thou yon hawk high i' the lift,
 Like barque, without a helm, adrift ?
 Yet, see him noo, in swiftest flight,
 An' think on some puir birdling's plight.
 The hawk is Bothwell, lookin' doon !
 An' little can ye bide his froon,
 For wae for you will be the day
 When that hawk swoops upon his prey
 Aye ! even noo he whets his beak,
 An' tries his talons while I speak.
 The hour that sees this sunlight fail,
 Will see a change in Liddesdale."
- Then, while they watch'd her frenzied face,
 The rage-light died, and, in its place,
 A weird, mysterious, vacant stare
 Entered her eyes, half-closed, as there
 Amid the woods she seemed to see
 Some strange prophetic mystery.
 And o'er their souls she cast a blight,
 With visions of her second-sight.
- " I hear the death-bell in the breeze.
 I trace the doom-light 'mang the trees.
 I read the signs o' weird an' woe.
 I mark the triumphs o' a foe.
 I see a glen—I ken its name—
 The dead in heaps, nor hearth, nor hame
 But reddens, in the awfu' glow
 O' hoose an' shelter burnin' low.
 I see the women, thro' the reek,
 Crouch, oot o' sicht, an' fear'd to speak.
 I see the red-coats ridin' thro'
 The 'reiver's glen, wi' loud halloo !

(Note R.)

1470 An' daffin', wi' new heart o' grace,
Where since they daurna shew their face.
An'—throwin' doon what winna burn—
Harry the reivers in their turn."

Did Bothwell know of Nance's power
Their hopes to raise, or spirits cower,
A fitter time, or better place,
He could not choose to help his case.
For, with the reivers' spirits chilled,
Scarce were her mystic accents stilled,
Ere, from the bottom of the glen,
1480 Was heard th' approach of armed men.
'Twas not the ringing, martial tread
Nor stately stride of soldier bred.
'Twas but a rustle 'mid the leaves,
Or sigh that sombre Autumn heaves;
A breaking twig, a conscious fear,
Which tells of human beings near.
But, fascinated, still they stood,
And waited Nance's change of mood.
Till, with a shrill and piercing cry,
1490 She screamed, "Turn, reivers! turn and fly!
The hawk has swooped upon his prey,
And few are left by fall of day."
Then, like a startled deer, she sprung
The brushwood and the trees among,
And left them, scared, in woful plight,
Unfit for battle or for flight.
Cowed by her uncouth, weird-like strain,
Unmanned by visions of her brain.

But, as the sounds from down the glen
1500 Drew nearer to the ambushed men,
They realised that capture meant
The gallows or imprisonment;
Then facing round, as tho' to flee,
Said Mangerton, "Men! follow me!
Leave Elliot on his mossy bed,
They will not harm our noble dead."
Then, creeping up the lonely glen,
They sought an exit from the ken
Of Bothwell's troopers, coming fast
1510 Upon their heels, until at last,

O'ershadowed by the hanging boughs
 In varied shades that Autumn shews,
 An opening, in the forest's side,
 Promised a covert shade to hide.
 A rivulet's sweet, gurgling flow
 Was heard the undergrowth below,
 But, save its silv'ry, tinkling sound,
 Was silence everywhere around.
 When, from the gloom, with sword in hand,
 1520 Sprang, like a flash, the other band
 Which Bothwell sent to aid the men
 Advancing from the bottom glen.

"By God! we're trapped," a reiver oried,
 While leaping to his chieftain's side,
 Who, with his back against a tree,
 Plied blade and pistol furiously.
 Three soldiers dead or dying lay
 Upon the bracken-covered brae.
 As many reivers, wounded, fell
 1530 By sword or dagger in the dell.
 The others, swaying, struggled round,
 Or, falling, fought upon the ground.
 While, hand to hand, and eye to eye,
 Uncertain seemed the victory,
 For what each reiver lacked in skill
 To use as brand, or pikeman's bill,
 Was more than balanced by his power
 Of seizing, at his needed hour,
 1540 Whate'er, in place of steel or brand,
 The chance of war put in his hand.
 But hearing now the clang of blade,
 The reinforcements, from the glade,
 Rushed onward, in impetuous way,
 In eager haste to join the fray.
 Then, while each eye gleamed deadly hate,
 More grievous grew the reiver's strait.
 For if before it passed his might
 To better, or improve his plight,
 'Twas worse with foemen reinforced,
 1550 To shew his strength, or do his worst
 Against them, when so surely led
 By Bothwell's skill, even tho' his bed
 Of pain was where he fevered lay,
 And seemed to guide this bloody fray.

But soon the hard-fought fight was done,
For, with the dead, lay Mangerton.

Vain was his gift of power and might,
For no one arm could wage that fight,
What tho' his hand might ward the blow
1560 That sped the death-cloud to the brow,
Soon in that many-sided fight,
Came forth the ever nearing blight,
Which turned the power he caused to flow.
And met his firmest, deffest blow;
For tho' five troopers there lay dead,
The victims of his sweeping blade,
And other two lay wounded sore,
He bled till he could fight no more,
But sank upon his trembling knees,
1570 And fell dead 'mong his enemies.

While of the score of reivers strong
Who sought, with him, t' avenge their wrong,
But three escaped to tell the tale,
In now faint-hearted Liddesdale.
The others in that lonely dell
Fought nobly, till they fighting fell,
For not a reiver 'midst them all
But saw at least one soldier fall
To his bright blade. Still, vain their fight,
1580 For, save the three who took to flight,
The reivers fought, but chance had none,
For Bothwell's troops were three to one.
And so they fell. But to this day
Men speak of Mangerton's affray,
And tell the tale with bated breath,
How, hero-like, they met their death
While fighting odds, as is most meet,
Like patriots at their chieftain's feet.

The fight was past, and, man to man,
More soldier's blood than reiver's ran,
For, hero-like, they sought not fame,
But vengeance full on those who came
To reive the reiver: and to feel
The power of slaying those who steal.
While of Lord Bothwell's forty men
Who fought the reivers in the glen,

But ten—the favoured sons of fate—
 Unwounded passed the castle-gate.
 Aye! of that band of stalwart men
 Sent forth to conquer—only ten
 Could march unaided, grim and grey,
 Across the drawbridge covered way,
 And answer to the muster calls,
 With surly troops around the walls,
 Who watched the fruits of the affray
 With envious, undisguised dismay.

While thus each Border chieftain gave
 His life to fill a reiver's grave,
 They died content to know that still
 Their names would live. Like yonder hill,
 A landmark to a coming race.
 A memory of their time and place.
 Or, did he spend the leaden hour
 Like Armstrong, now in Bothwell's power,
 Lamenting, 'mid the ruins grey,
 The passing of the reiver's day?
 No choice had they. The reiver chief
 Must either, like some common thief,
 Spend weary hours in prison cell,
 Or, like black Elliot in the dell,
 Be slain, and with his dying breath
 Proclaim his freedom by his death.
 For Bothwell's power was, to their band,
 Invincible.

On every hand,
 His strategy too strong and keen
 To let his guiding hand be seen.
 His strength of mind, endurance, will,
 Were more than match for all their skill;
 His guidance of each sword and lance
 Too sure for any reiver's chance.
 Thus they accepted, with what grace
 They could, Lord Bothwell's power and place.
 Enduring, for their broken laws,
 His punishment upon their cause.
 And mourned, what every Briton loved,
 The cause in which his fathers moved.
 For, from the day when youth was man,
 Each reiver knew no other plan

1640 Of filling larder, scrip, or purse,
 Than fire and plunder—often worse—
 As dire necessity laid claim
 To what he needed—are he came
 Enriched and laden home once more,
 And laid at wife's or mistress' door
 Whate'er she chose to claim as hers,
 In answer to her "claim of spurs." (Note 8.)

1650 At dripping dawn next morn they found
 Dark Elliot still upon the ground.
 The women of the glen, by night,
 Had sought and drawn their loved from sight,
 So that, when morning light displayed
 A dismal, rain-bedraggled glade,
 No trace of wounded could be seen,
 Nor reiver dead, upon the green.
 While in the glen the brooklet's song
 Alone awoke its murmurs long.
 But none had taken Elliot bold,
 No, none would claim the reiver old.
 His sullen face had, overnight,
 1660 Become more peaceful, wan, and white.
 The scowl so often on his brow
 Had faded. Rage had vanished now.
 And features which but lately bore
 A frown lay calm, and stern no more,
 In death, akin to great and good,
 Who, in some better cause, their blood
 Had shed in vain !

Nay ! not in vain !

1670 For heroes' blood upon the plain,
 If spilt for Honour, Truth, or Right,
 Is hallowed aye in Heaven's sight.
 Yet not alone the reiver lay
 Amid the moss, and mire, and clay.
 In vain the women passed his bed,
 And sought their loves among the dead.
 In vain, with aching arms, they'd take
 Their guardians hence, for love's sweet sake.
 In vain their bodies they would steal.
 The love they shewed could all things seal.
 For in their souls, now dark and grey,
 1680 Love-tints were but a memory.

Yet love which passes, calm and brave,
The shuddering portals of the grave,
And can in death's cold features move,
Deserves a holier name than Love.

There, on the reiver's hillock, lay
Beside him, clad in faded grey,
A lonely form—a woman's—dead !
And hours had passed since life had fled.
690 For all who saw that opening day,
Saw with bowed head, and reverently.
Poor Nance ! had sense, with failing breath,
Come near thy brain, and conquered death ?
And had his own, while dark hours roll,
Held converse with thy passing soul,
And begged, in penitence, that thou
Would'st intercede—thou knewest how—
His sin, unfaithfulness, and pride,
While lying at his bleeding side ?
1700 And has his heart—estranged the while—
Drawn near, with reassuring smile,
As home thy footsteps slowly bend ?
In life, apart ! At one, the end.

“ Uproot the reivers ! not a stone
Leave standing of their den.
A menace, in the days bygone,
Too long has been their glen.
Bring with you what will carry. Break
What tries to run or turn.
And what ye care not home to take,
1710 See first that it will burn.
Bring hither but a dozen men.
But sweep of armour clean
The furthest corners of the glen,
With every hut between.
With Armstrong send his reiver throng
As prisoners, to share
The prison cells, for short or long,
From Mary's ' Justice Ayre.'
Ne'er must these reivers rise again,
1720 So raze them without fail.
Let Bothwell's soldiers make it plain
What's meant in Liddesdale.”

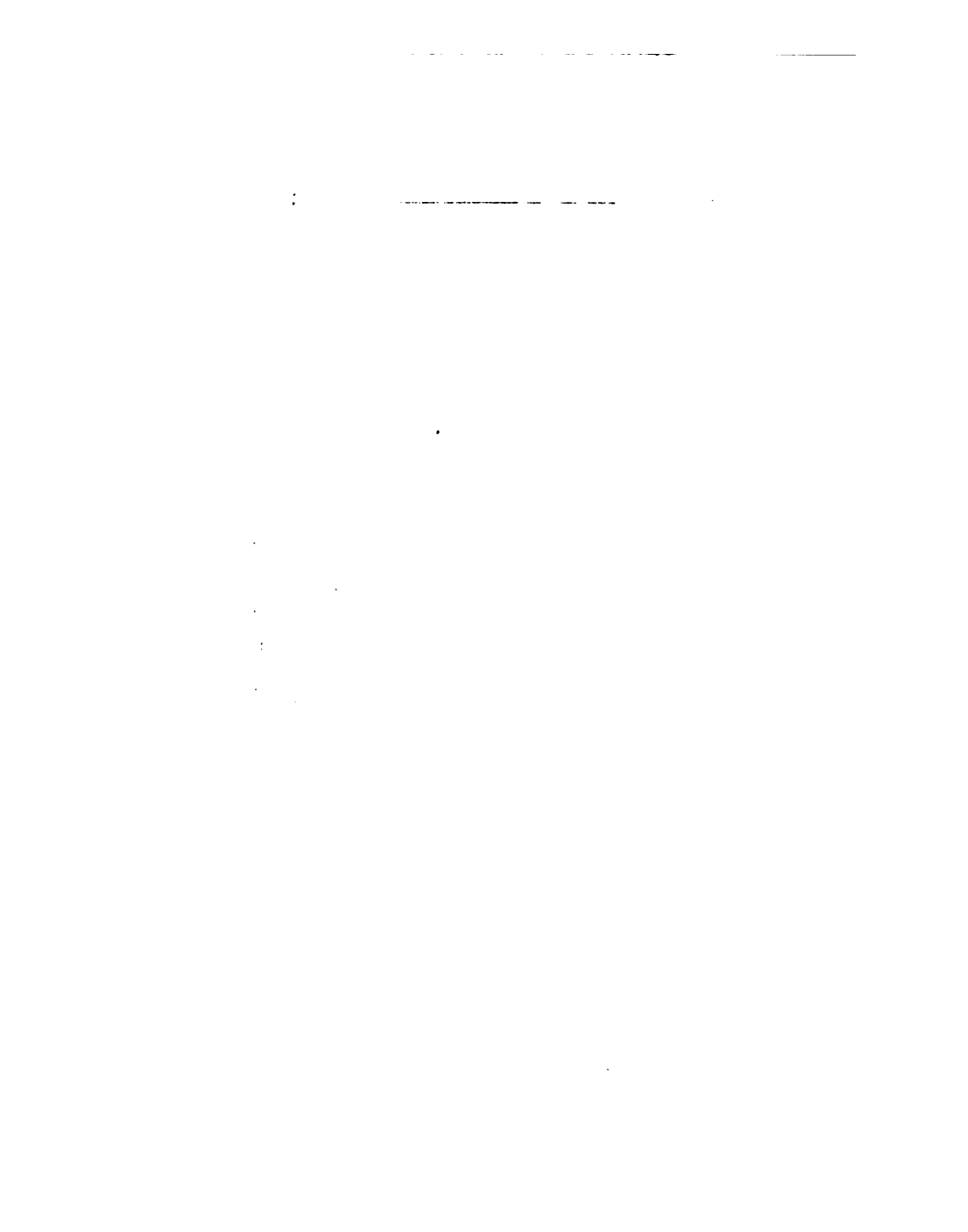
And so that day, in Hermitage,
 Was spent in making plain
 The writing on the fatal page,
 The seal of death and pain.
 For, ere the light had passed to dark,
 'And dark again to light,
 Lord Bothwell's power had left its mark,
 1730 The mark of want and blight.
 On all who, in the reiver's glen,
 Had thought the danger past,
 And sought their homes, from cave and den,
 To spend this night—their last.

When Elliot, Nance, and Mangerton
 Were buried out of sight,
 And Autumn's flickering day was done
 And merging into night,
 1740 A tumult in the reiver's glen
 Awoke the echoes round.
 The screams of women, shouts of men,
 Jarred on the peaceful sound.
 And, as the shades of even fell,
 Upon a scene once fair
 With brooklet, glade, and wood, and dell,
 Uprose the fearsome glare
 Of vandal's fire: its cruel tongue
 Caressing in its flame
 The home of age, the cot of young—
 1750 All in its way that came.
 Respecting not the maiden's bower,
 Nor heeding in its hate
 What decked the dead—a simple flower—
 Relentless, stern as Fate.
 The morning sun had wept to see
 The stalwarts of the glen
 Brought homeward dead—a fierce decree
 Upon its fairest men.
 The evening beam let fall its tears
 1760 Within its fitful shade.
 When fire consumed the very biers
 Of those who kept the glade,
 And died, protecting "Hearth and Hame,"
 Among its gloomy trees,
 While sighs from earth and heaven came
 From sad hearts and the breeze.

PART II.

—
"THE JUSTICE AYRE."

[illegible]





JEDBURGH CASTLE.

PART II

"THE JUSTICE AYRE."

- When the pearly dew is falling
On the flow'rets and the trees;
When, in mystic whispers calling,
Twilight beckons to the breeze;
When each sleeping bud to dreamland
Sends its perfumed soti away,
And the shades come forth from gleamland
For a while on earth to stay—
Then, 'mid the gloaming,
10 Let me be roaming
Where aye fondest memories cling.
By scaur or by brae,
At close of the day,
In Jedworth's sweet vale, in the Spring.
- When the balmy breezes, sighing,
Ripple, with a sweet caress,
Pools in dreamy shadow lying
Drowsy in their loneliness;
When the trees' most radiant beauty,
20 When the sunlight—when the shade—
When the hills around, in duty—
Smile upon thee, happy glade—
All life is dearer,
Heaven seems nearer.
Griefs o'er us, like fleecy clouds, sail
Beneath, round, above,
All whisper of Love,
When Summer enfolds Jedworth Vale.
- When the year is gently falling;
30 When is out the golden grain;
When we hear the huntsman calling;
When the birds fly south again;

When the leaf falls, sere and yellow;
 When the nights are cold and clear;
 When the fruit hangs ripe and mellow;
 When the robin's chirp we hear—
 Then, 'mid the shading,
 Withering, fading,
 On forest, on wood, and on dale,
 40 Sweetly sad is my dream,
 As I list to the stream,
 When Autumn has kissed Jedworth vale.

When Boreas, madly roaring,
 Sweeps the lonely, silent glen;
 Or when mist is gently soaming,
 Seeking Heaven's gate again;
 Or when snow, like mother tender,
 Mantles Nature with a smile—
 Storm may seek in vain to rend her,
 50 For she nestles close the while—
 Then, when there lingers
 Frost's icy fingers,
 They chill not the smile on thy face.
 By sweet fancy led,
 I wander, sweet Jed,
 Thy valley in Winter's embrace.

When the golden east is blushing
 With radiance of the dawn;
 When, with silver linings flushing,
 60 Cloudlets o'er the sky are drawn;
 When in notes so pure and mellow,
 Joins the feathered choir in song;
 When in robes green, white, and yellow,
 Decks the meads her paths along—
 Then, with light breaking,
 Earth from sleep waking,
 Smiles up to the day newly born;
 While stream, bird, and flower,
 All welcome the hour
 70 In Jedworth's sweet vale in the morn.

See the sparkle of the river;
 Hear the rustle of the trees,
 As they praise the mighty Giver
 Of the sunlight and the breeze.

And the dancing, sweet reflection
 On the shining water's way,
 Tries to shew life's near connection
 With a vast Eternity—
 Then, 'mid the shimmer,
 Brighter or dimmer,
 As major or minor the tune
 The fair beamlet plays,
 I muse, as it strays,
 In Jedworth's sweet valley at noon.

80

When the busy hum of Nature
 Sinks to silence, calm and deep;
 When to rest each living creature
 Lulls itself in peaceful sleep;
 When the ripple of the river
 Is the only sound I hear,
 And the weeping aspen's quiver
 Is the only movement near—
 Then let me ponder,
 Lost in sweet wonder,
 While hours are like thoughts in their flight.
 In silence, alone,
 Oft, oft have I gone
 Up Jedworth's sweet vale in the night.

90

100

“Ho! open your lattice,
 And join the acclaim,
 For the Queen is among us,
 This morning she came.
 Nay, 'tis not to raise taxes,
 Or burdens to lay,
 'Tis to rid us of evils
 She journeys this way.
 For she comes in the power
 Of her innocence strong,
 Like a husbandless maiden,
 To right us our wrong.
 Aye! but where is her husband?
 And well may ye ask,
 Tho' I fear it will be
 But a profitless task.
 For they say he is sulking
 Adown by the Clyde,

110

(Note T.)

And he cannot take leave of
 His fond parents' side.
 Aye ! so e'en let him stay there,
 120 And so, too, say I,
 For she needs not his presence,
 Nor slack company.
 For, but give him his skittles,
 'Tis all he can do ;
 We can well do without him,
 And so can she too.
 And they tell——"

But the sentence
 Thus unfinished lay,
 For the distant cheers told that
 130 The Queen came that way.
 And all, in expectance,
 Craned forward to see
 The beauty that France had
 Extolled lovingly.
 For 'neath the old turrets
 And thatch, wearing grey,
 In the ancient free burgh
 Was seen on that day
 140 Sootia's queen in her splendour
 Of power and of grace,
 All resplendent in beauty
 Of figure and face,
 A picture of sweetness,
 A study of worth,
 An object of worship
 By all, from her birth.
 A smile worth an empire,
 A look and a mien
 That proclaimed her, unrivalled,
 150 Their ruler and queen.
 And she passed on her palfrey,
 A fine dappled grey.
 The Queen and her courser
 For many a day
 Were talked of at corner,
 Described in the square,
 And praised for their beauty
 And grace everywhere.

- 160 Within a dingy, curtained room,
 Where sought in vain to quell its gloom
 The sunbeams, glancing bright and fair,
 Was held Queen Mary's "Justice Ayre."
 A grim assize, where must appear
 Each man accused, that he might clear
 Each blot and tarnish from his name,
 And rid himself of skaith and blame,
 And prove his case, alert and keen,
 That service, conduct, life was clean.
 And none might 'scape, howe'er he tried,
 170 Until his Queen was satisfied.
 A dais raised, and canopy,
 Proclaimed, to the observant eye,
 The Royal Judge's justice-seat,
 Where she would equal justice mete
 To those who erred against her laws,
 Or claimed, perchance, a saving clause.
 Tho' oft, as grave indictments swelled,
 Was clemency as weakness held
 By many a malcontent or thief
 180 Whose course of crime would have been brief
 Had law and justice claimed their sway,
 Nor been o'erruled by clemency.
 Too often, in her wealth of power,
 Queen Mary opened, like a flower,
 Her woman's heart—left law aside—
 And tenderness instead, applied.
 But, beauteous as the tribute seem,
 There round were those who dared to dream
 The misuse of her kindly deed
 190 To suit their own disloyal need.

 The jangling chain's metallic din,
 From distant cell was heard,
 And nearer came, till strife within
 Queen Mary's soul was stirred.
 For there before her, hung in chains,
 A prisoner at her feet,
 Stood Armstrong, near to bear the pains
 Of justice she might mete.
 Erect, without a trace of fear,
 200 He spurned to shew the sores
 His shackles caused, nor seemed to hear
 The shouts and clanging doors.

His mighty arms and powerful hands
 Hung limply by his side,
 Encircled by his prison bands
 To quell his Border pride.
 His countenance was wan and pale,
 His eyes were sunk and dazed.
 What wonder, seeing him, his clan
 Gazed at their chief amazed.
 'Twas only then they saw his face
 Since captured in the glen.
 For Bothwell, as a chieftain's place,
 Sent him before his men.
 No sign of recognition passed,
 Nor furtive glance exchanged
 These reivers, s'en from first to last,
 They looked as men estranged;
 As tho' they ne'er had met before,
 These sons of moss and fen,
 For each a dour indifference wore,
 Nor owned a chieftain then.
 But there enchained they stood, endured
 Their pain by night and day,
 Each to his neighbour's wrist secured—
 A silent, grim array.

Each face was heavy, dark, and still.
 Each heart was dead to all
 Mere feelings. Let them save or kill,
 The blow stop or let fall,
 What mattered it? A man could do
 No more than he might try!
 Be to his clan and chieftain true,
 Fight to the end—and die!
 What if a stern, unbending Fate
 Would not redress his wrong,
 But handed, when, alas, too late,
 The weak o'er to the strong?
 He could be still a man, at least,
 And, as a hero brave,
 Leave fear and cowardice to beast,
 And servitude to slave!
 Each reiver stood, with fear unknown,
 And calmly drew his breath,
 As tho' akm with danger grown,
 And face to face with death,

He knew not what was meant by fear,
 But was content to wait
 His Sovereign's will, nor dreamt to hear
 Of life—but death, his fate.

A single moment gazed the Queen
 At him, who had so lately been
 The strength of all his Berrier clan,
 In figure every inch a man.
 Then turning, with a sigh, away,
 She gave her woman's feelings play,
 And to her waiting guards at hand
 Spoke out in tones of sharp command :
 "Go ! fetch the jailor quickly here !
 Let prison locksmith, too, appear."
 Then, as they came in quick surprise,
 They met in fear, her flashing eyes,
 And wished, for once, they had foreseen
 Her withering looks and anger keen.
 "Look at these wristlets ! barely can
 They clasp the arms of such a man.
 And surely shackles scarcely need
 To pain the limbs, and make them bleed !
 Strike off his fetters ! When again
 Ye use them, see that causing pain
 Is not a sequel to their use,
 Utility is not abuse !
 His swollen hands your chains proclaim
 Those of a felon.

"Thus he came
 A man, as yet untainted, clean,
 No prisoner—save that these were seen—
 For, till a man convicted stands,
 No power has right to bind his hands.
 Aye ! till his felony is proved,
 Or when he in sedition moved,
 Until his guilt is plain to me,
 Each man may hold himself as free.
 Unlock his anklets ! loose his chain !
 His limbs and hands make free again,
 When he released before you stands,
 Rob him who can of name and lands
 For, till his guilt is proven clear,
 He is as free as any here.

290 And if, at last, stands firm his plea,
Th' accuser is more false than he."

Her words were barely said complete,
Ere all his shackles, at his feet,
Lay in a mingled heap, and he,
As to his bonds, at least, was free.
Then turning to him, as he stood,
The Queen in altered tone and mood
Addressed him. Wondrous sweet to hear
Fell all her words upon his ear:
"Armstrong! I knew thy name of yore.
300 A Borderer—can man be more?—
It takes not patent, parchment, seal,
Man's truest greatness to reveal.
Mind'st thou the day—Aye! fourteen years
Have passed since, on my childish fears,
Thou first impressed thyself to me
As mass of black iniquity!
Thou wert of crimes the sum. Thy name
Could conjure up of sin and shame
Enough to fill my childish head,
310 And keep me trembling in my bed.
I knew thee, too, in later days—
Mistaken tho' I thought thy ways—
When more than man thou seemed to be,
And ne'er have I forgotten thee—
But now, I know thee as thou art!
A genuine, true, Scottish heart.
And, tho' this trouble darks thy brow,
Thy Queen will not desert thee now.

320 "I was a child, en route for France,
And wild, contrary winds by chance
Our galleon drove, with all its pride,
To shelter in the Solway's tide.
While England's fleets were scouring o'er,
In wild alarm, our eastern shore, (Note U.)
Seeking in vain to make me bride
To England's prince, to swell its pride.
No sign of changing wind was seen,
Tho' mariners, alert and keen,
Kept anxious watch, nor day nor night
330 Did favouring sign appear in sight.

And, gazing from our cabin door,
 We saw and longed for Scotia's shore.
 At last I caught the captain's ear,
 With anxious heart, amid my fear,
 I watched him due attention pay
 To my fixed importunity.
 That while we lay, two men might oar
 My maids and me an hour ashore,
 And, while we raced along the sand,
 340 Might ready waiting for us stand !
 Tho' naught of fear was ever thought,
 For, while for days we lay afloat,
 No living soul, from morn till night,
 Had even once appeared in sight.

" At first my urging was in vain,
 Tho' to comply his heart was fain.
 Until, one lovely shining day,
 He let me have my wished-for way.
 We landed 'neath the boatmen's care,
 350 And scampered, laughing, everywhere,
 Until, with freedom bolder grown,
 We left the boat and men alone,
 And clambered o'er some grassy knolls,
 Four childish, careless, happy souls.
 The sea was barely out of sight,
 Ere, to our terror and affright,
 Three men sprang from a hidden cave,
 And took us to their living grave,
 A den, far hidden out of sight,
 360 With hole so small that heaven's light
 Could barely penetrate the gloom
 Of this, the smugglers' little room.

" Methinks I see it even now—
 The chieftain, with his noble brow,
 His partial smile of quick surprise,
 And these three ruffians' greedy eyes.
 They sought to take my seal of gold,
 My bracelets, and my locket old,
 They rifled, too, my childish friends
 370 Of all their jewelled odds and ends,
 And threatened us with instant death,
 If once we spoke above our breath.

- At first we bore it fearfully,
 Their thefts, and their indignity,
 Until the chieftain, raging, rose,
 When fear the smugglers' actions froze.
 He bade them in a growled command
 Our trinkets back to us to hand.
 And while they hesitating stood,
 380 Before they made his orders good,
 He shewed them plainly how he felt,
 And whipped a pistol from his belt;
 But ere another word he spoke,
 And ere a sound the silence broke,
 In little heaps our jewels lay,
 Before each maid invitingly.
 Then, warning us to tell to none
 Whatever we had seen or done,
 In every hand he smiling laid
 390 A shining piece of gold, and said,
 'Off to your ship! nor seek again
 To leave the safety of its chain,
 Until a favouring wind shall chance
 To waft you to the shores of France.'
 Then, hoisting us from out his cave,
 Directions how to leave he gave,
 And bade us go, lest, if betrayed,
 Worse luck befel next time we strayed.
- "How quickly o'er the dunes we flew,
 400 When once we had the sea in view.
 What feeling of a danger past
 Filled all our hearts, as running fast
 Towards the shore, there, bathed in light
 We saw our ship—a welcome sight.
 But 'mid our joy—were we alone?
 We cried, 'Where have our boatmen gone?'
 There, high and dry upon the beach,
 Far from the ebbing Solway's reach,
 The shallop lay—but where, oh! where
 410 Our oarsmen?—asked we in despair.
 When—far across the sandy waste,
 We spied them, eager in their haste.
 They searched the hillocks round them spread,
 For trace of where we might have fled.
 But joyous shout and wild halloo
 Soon brought us to their anxious view,

- And from a friendly signal learned
That we, their charges, had returned.
So, leisurely they made their way
420 Towards us and the smiling bay,
While we, once more our trouble o'er,
Sought carelessly the boat and shore.
I, seeing then a lucky chance,
Rushed off and passed them in advance.
I left my maidens far behind,
With liberty alone in mind.
- " But what was wrong beneath my feet?
And why did shouts my efforts greet?
I stopped amid my wild career,
430 And all at once my heart in fear
Sank like my limbs. I could not stand,
But floundered in the treacherous sand.
A horror struck me to the heart,
Why did I from the others part?
For, tho' the sand seemed soft and still,
I sank, despite my force or will.
Down! down! amid its awful slime,
Nor could I from its suction climb.
My limbs were covered, to my waist
440 My body was at length encased.
And still I felt the awful power
That sucked me downwards. Like an hour (*Note V.*)
Each minute in that awful state—
The fearfullest devised by Fate—
At length I felt a presence near,
Who grasped my arms. Amid my fear
I, somehow, felt my danger past,
That help had come to me at last.
I never heard a spoken word,
450 But saw him, from a splintered board,
Exert his strength, and while I gazed,
I felt myself by magic raised.
Then, in his arms I safely lay,
While being carried tenderly,
And love o'ercame me, for I drew
His face to mine, and kissed him true
Upon the lips, nor felt disgrace,
For 'twas the smuggler chieftain's face.
- " The mariners had quickly crossed
460 To where the tiny wavelets tossed,

And drawn the little rowing-boat
 Down to the edge, tall half afloat,
 And my preserver, in his care,
 Within his sturdy bosom bare
 Me nestling to their anxious arms.
 Released at last from their alarms,
 For all the while, my danger seen
 Had to them like a nightmare been.
 And only were they satisfied,
 470 When safely o'er the galleon's side.
 And ere the morning sun arose,
 A wind had kissed our weather bows.
 And we were far upon the sea,
 A waste of waters on our lee,
 And speeding onward, fresh and fair,
 To France's headlands, grim and bare.
 I ne'er have seen that chieftain's face
 Who shewed us all these acts of grace.
 Nor known his name, and time is long,
 480 Until this day—'twas thou, Armstrong."

Had mighty Jove, enthroned on high
 In grim and awful majesty,
 In ponderous sport, at this poor world
 A thunderbolt unerring hurled,
 To reach the captive reiver's feet,
 His wonder had been less complete,
 Than what was pictured in his face,
 As, standing in his ordered place,
 He looked in helpless mute amaze
 490 As every unexpected phase
 She caused inconstant to appear,
 And fall upon his listening ear.
 As, wondering at that tale, as told
 By regal lips—a tale of old,
 Recalling to the Borderer brave,
 Adventures in the smuggler's cave
 Long since forgotten, like a dream
 Of some dim past, it e'en might seem,
 Did not her smile, her winning way,
 500 Her face—revive the memory.
 Astonished at her spoken word,
 He stood in silence, tho' he heard.
 Then, with his fetterings complete,
 All riven at his swollen feet,

He stretched his mighty limbs abroad,
 And muscles cramped upon the road,
 Or in imprisonment restrained,
 Relaxed in liberty new gained.
 Then moving forward in this hour
 510 Of newly found exultant power,
 He bent him, humbly, gallantly,
 In graceful homage on his knee.
 And, ere upon her courtiers dawned
 His purpose, seizing Mary's hand,
 Nor thinking what he did amiss,
 He raised it, and a courtier's kiss
 Imprinted there. The first free link
 Of will that wavered on the brink
 Of old-time lawlessness outworn,
 520 And loyalty but newly born.

"My Sovereign," he cried, "my Queen,
 Had once my ageing eyes but seen
 Thy regal mien, thy queenly grace,
 Thy winsome form, thy beauteous face,
 Or known that heart, the tenderest
 That ever beat in Royal breast.
 Dost think that to thy presence now
 I had been brought, thou knowest how?
 A branded felon might I be—
 530 A headless trunk—a memory,
 In servitude, a galley-slave—
 If but thy voice the mandate gave.
 Yet would it almost pleasure me,
 To be a slave, sweet Queen, for thee.
 Aye! little did I dream that day
 That Scotia's queen across my way
 Had passed, a laughing, happy child,
 Among the smugglers rude and wild.
 A herd of Dutchmen, cowards all,
 540 Who only cared to hear my call,
 When seeking them to bring to land
 A galley's smuggled contraband.

"Yet, bear with me a moment still—
 A man more used to wood and hill
 Than with a halting tongue to prate
 To courtiers, or to nobles great.

I was a reiver, in yon glen,
 Brought up to think with other men
 That reiving was a lawful trade,
 550 If raids were on the English made.
 The infant left his mother's knee,
 And battles fought with every tree.
 As boy, he longed for manhood, when
 He might cross swords with Englishmen.
 And deemed them but the lawful prey
 That chance had thrown across his way.
 No sin to cheat; no wrong to steal;
 Nor, if it paid him to conceal,
 To tell him aught, indeed, to yearn
 560 To do him harm at every turn.
 And, knowest thou, not once nor twice
 Has Hereford, like an iron vice,
 When bent on laying Scotland low,
 Spent on our heads his hardest blow,
 Swept our loved glen from end to end,
 With all his vigour, 'break or bend.'
 Still, not a reiver in the glen
 But vowed his vengeance o'er again.
 And kept his word with added fire,
 570 Perchance, in memory of a sire,
 A hut in flames—a wife in tears,
 Or friend's death-horror in his ears.
 But now, the reiver's day is changed,
 And foes no longer are estranged.
 For why? when England's barren stock (Note W)
 Gives place to Scotland's chosen rock,
 One prince, one king shall wield his sway
 From Cornwall north to Cromartie.
 And civil strifes no more be known
 580 'Neath Britain's strongly guarded throne.
 And 'Unity,' o'er bond and free,
 Shall spring, beloved Queen, from thee."

A moment silent sat the Queen.
 Her thoughts, perchance, what might have been,
 And dreaming Fate or Time might bring
 Her infant son to be the king,
 Not only of her Scottish state,
 But also of her alien great.
 The thoughts were passed in quick review,
 590 For what he said might yet come true,

But, throwing o'er her mind a cloak,
 She quickly to the reiver spoke.
 "Armstrong! thou reasonest well. I know
 How youthful predilections grow
 Into ideas; then from these
 To theories, which seem to please;
 And then from theories, a thrill
 Which seems the conscience e'en to fill
 Until we dream it wrong or right
 600 And other feelings put to flight
 Before its power: its very breath
 Is to us then as life or death;
 Yet, take away the youthful seed,
 Then the idea, at our need,
 Assumes to us a different guise,
 And truths before are now but lies—
 The tissue of a wandering brain
 To all, except its owner, plain.

"Armstrong! thy reiving days are past.
 610 Thy latest foray was thy last.
 No more, in distant Liddesdale,
 Must homestead, nay, nor castle quail.
 I want thee now to give me true
 Thy promise. And the homage due
 To Scotland's crown, and not to me
 Alone, but to its sovereignty!—
 Thou canst not shut thine eyes to fate—
 Serve now the Crown, and all of late
 Against thee—here I pledge my word—
 620 Shall never more again be heard!
 And from thy Queen, tho' late in time,
 Accept her thanks! Amid the slime
 Of Solway's quicksands had she been
 Engulfed, instead of here thy Queen,
 But for thy swift and kindly arm,
 That saved her then from death and harm,
 And risked thy youthful life to save
 Her from a treacherous, early grave,
 And tho' ye knew her not to be
 630 The Queen of thy futurity,
 Thine action shewed thee to belong,
 And worthy of thy name, Armstrong!"

Irresolute, the reiver stood,
 The victim of his changing mood,
 What ! leave the calling of his sire,
 Which, since his youth, he felt inspire
 His bravery, and when he stirred,
 Make Armstrong's name a household word ?
 Yet, here a prisoner he stood.
 640 A captured reiver, and his blood
 The law demanded as its due,
 For edicts broken, not a few.
 And beaten too, in open fight,
 By a despised carpet-knight.
 (To those alone around the throne
 Was Bothwell's prowess fully known.)
 But, weightiest reason of them all,
 Before him, in this judgment hall,
 The reiver faced his judge—a queen,
 650 The fairest vision ever seen.
 The noblest soul, the kindest heart
 That ever took a reiver's part.
 Irresolute no more, he threw
 Himself before her, in the view
 Of all his clansmen standing near,
 In homage absolute, sincere.

The Queen was moved, her heaving breast
 Bore witness how severe the test
 Of memory, and how near her own
 660 The hearts had of her subjects grown.
 She rose, and with her queenly hand
 Raised Armstrong, bidding him to stand.
 While, by her kindness overcome,
 He stood before her speechless, dumb,
 No more an outlaw, by her grace
 Raised almost to a friendly place.
 In verity, no courtier near
 Would read her thoughts, or less of fear
 Shew in her service, right or wrong,
 670 If she but willed, than Armstrong.

"Brave Borderer," she sweetly said,
 "I welcome thee, as from the dead—
 The deadness of a life of hate,
 And bounded by the 'Note-o-gate.' (Note X.)

Back to new life, with bounds outgrown,
 That claims broad Scotland for its own.
 I've seen thee low in homage bend,
 And now, may claim thee as a friend."
 Then, with a gesture all her own,
 680 She mounted to her justice-throne,
 And there proclaimed her mission past,
 The hour of liberty at last.
 "Disperse ! my lords !" she smiling cried,
 "Until the morrow, when we ride
 To Hermitage, in Liddesdale ;
 From Bothwell's lips to hear the tale
 Of all his mission. He confesses
 To boredom, while his wound progresses.
 And, Armstrong, now thy friendship shew
 690 By riding with us, when we go.
 I make them free, so, side by side,
 Bid these, thy clansmen, ready ride
 Before us, with the morning's sun,
 And shew to all that now are done
 Their reiver ways, and thou, their chief,
 No longer art a Border thief,
 By leading us the safest way
 To Hermitage. Tho' dim and grey,
 Its towering walls shall never be
 700 Aught but a friendly keep to thee.
 So prove thy honesty, and ride
 By me, while acting as my guide."

The former reiver then was seen
 To bend before his lawful queen.
 And, honoured by her confidence,
 Wished even then that might commence
 His duty. While devoted, near
 His clansmen gathered, void of fear.
 They vowed allegiance. From that day,
 710 Old Scotland owned, beneath her sway,
 No braver, nor more loyal men,
 Than these staunch reivers of the glen.

The moorland sky was dark,
 The moorland heath was grey,
 Not e'en the sound of watch-dog's bark
 Awoke the echoes' play.

730 The autumn woods were bare,
 And gaunt and leafless trees
 Moaned dismally in floating air,
 Or bent before the breeze.

 The brooklet's summer song
 Had melted into tears.
 And now a current, deep and strong,
 The faded leaflet bears.

 The river's flashing rays
 Had lost their dazzling sheen,
 And turbid surge swept past the braces,
 Once clad in shaded green.

730 The castle's massive towers
 In sombre strength looked down.
 And braved Time's fleet and passing hours
 With stern, relentless frown.

 The moat was dark and still,
 Like frowning face at rest.
 And wild-duck, leaving stream and rill,
 Sought here his wat'ry nest,

 Within the castle tower,
 A brave knight fretting lay,
 His grievous wound, for many an hour,
 Had held him 'neath its sway.

740 Again the castle leech
 Had dressed it, in his care,
 With all the remedies in reach,
 Or what he might prepare.

 But Bothwell's cure was slow,
 His irritable mood
 And temper such that friend and foe
 In state of terror stood.

750 And oft his hardest word
 And castigation fell
 Upon the humble leech, who served
 Him faithfully and well.

"Go ! craven caitiff ! get thee gone
 With all thy nostrums vile !
 For heaven's sake, leave me alone
 To rest, at least, awhile.
 I dare not move, I dare not sigh,
 I hardly dare to breathe,
 But what I hear thy footsteps nigh,
 And lid, with drugs beneath.
 760 Bleed me again ? No ! by my soul !
 If one more drop I shed,
 I'll throw thy lancet and thy bowl
 Straight at thy physic-head.
 Had not my foothold played me false,
 Thy drugs, and charms, and thee,
 I fain had seen among the dulse,
 Beneath yon rolling sea,
 Or, had the reiver's craven blade
 770 Kept straight upon its course,
 Thy physic had some other made
 To go from bad to worse.
 Go ! study Servet ! ne'er again (Note Y.)
 Shall surgeon's lance or knife
 Add fever to my weakened brain,
 Or drain my precious life.
 Ye never heard of Servet ? No !
 Then read him, and give o'er.
 For loss of blood a knight lays low,
 780 And ye, like fools, draw more,
 Then say, 'How languidly he mends,'
 And from him all along,
 Steal, by his veins, what Nature sends
 Alone to make him strong.
 No ! not another ! By my soul !
 But shew thy cursed face
 With physic, and I swear I'll roll
 Thy carcase o'er the moat,
 Until I bring thee to the moat,
 790 And, heedless of thy cries,
 I'll run thee in, nor care a groat,
 But souse thee to the eyes.
 And hold thee there, thy head to cool,
 Altho' it be for days,
 Until ye promise but to fool
 The English with thy ways.

"But stay! who comes? Ho! warder, ho!
 Where hath the laggard gone?
 Fly, leech, and send him! Can ye shew
 800 For once thy ankle bone?
 A troop of horse! I' faith 'tis true!
 A goodly companie!
 It cannot reivers be anew
 To break their troth with me?
 What! ladies with them! By my sooth!
 Where hath that varlet gone?
 I'm in a tremor, of a truth!
 Why am I left alone?
 810 Ho, valet! warder! where away?
 Ye poltroons, can't ye hear?
 Are ye asleep, or all at play,
 That ne'er a soul looks near?
 Ha! footsteps do I hear?—I'm right!
 Methought I was deprived
 Of servants, and forgotten quite,
 Because this train arrived!"

While thus he shouted at his need,
 There sought his resting-place
 820 A soldier at his utmost speed,
 With flurried, anxious face.
 And ere his chief a word could wage,
 Or angry scowl could waste,
 To ope the vials of his wrath,
 The trooper cried in haste—
 "My lord! my lord! a train appears
 Upon the northern plain.
 No flag the leading horseman bears,
 Nor signal do they deign
 830 To make in answer to our own
 From turret and from tower,
 But we can see their horses blown
 And ridden hard this hour,
 So, give your orders fast, my lord!
 Let not our task be spared,
 For ne'er the castle's festive board
 Was bare or unprepared
 When Royal troop or garrison
 Came on us unawares,
 840 No one ere cast a malison
 On what our larder bears."

But barely understood he what
 His chief had hoped or feared,
 When, wheeling on the entrance-mat,
 He quickly disappeared.

Nearer and nearer came the train,
 Now lost and now in sight again.
 While castle larder strained its most,
 To cater for the coming host.
 Yet, not a sign it gave to shew
 850 That it was friendly, or a foe.
 So Bothwell argued it would be
 Some embassy, in haste to see
 How stood his garrison the test
 Of stirring up a reiver's nest.
 Tho' hardest was it to prepare
 His greeting to the ladies there.
 For how could knight, and such as he,
 Explain to those who came to see,
 860 That he was wounded in a fray,
 And yet was victor of the day ?
 And how could he, on couch of pain,
 Receive with courtesy, or deign
 To shew his visitors, that day,
 The rites of hospitality ?
 He cursed his chance, his wound, his fall,
 And Elliot's blunder most of all.
 But, mingled with his muttered curse
 His thanks to Fate it was no worse !

Again the soldier bustled in,
 870 Nor waited summons to begin,
 But uttered in Lord Bothwell's ear,
 The very news he longed to hear,
 " My lord ! my lord ! what can we do ?
 When came this train to nearer view
 Amazed was warder, soldier, leech,
 To note the company. In reach
 A bowshot from the castle-gate,
 With courtiers clad in robes of State,
 Right in the midst, on palfrey grey,
 880 Rode Scotland's queen right royally, (Note Z.)
 And at her side, amid the throng,
 Who was the guide—but Armstrong ?

Aye ! he whom thou, in yonder glade,
 Fought singly, and a prisoner made.
 And, as an escort, in advance
 Rode reivers, girt with sword and lance.
 While by the Queen, to quell alarms,
 Are courtiers, nobles, men-at-arms,
 As brave a sight as e'er was seen
 890 In Liddesdale before, I ween,
 Or ever gathered, spite its age,
 Beneath the walls of Hermitage.
 But hark ! its creaking drawbridge waits
 To welcome them within its gates."

The soldier vanished. As he ran,
 The foremost of Queen Mary's van
 Had crossed the moat, and, far below,
 Lord Bothwell heard them, to and fro,
 With hurrying feet, and laugh, and shout,
 900 Traverse in haste the yard without.
 While neigh of steed and clang of hoof
 Rang from the castle-base to roof.
 And barely had he time to turn
 With curiosity to burn,
 Before amid a courtly throng
 Of many he had known for long,
 He lay in silent, glad surprise,
 The object of their friendly eyes.
 There, by his couch, ne'er since his birth,
 910 Had gathered near so much of worth,
 Of beauty, wit, nor had it been
 Graced by the presence of his Queen,
 Whose happy voice but made him fain,
 When near her, to forget his pain.

"Greetings ! my Lord of Bothwell gay !
 Accept them from us all, I pray,
 See here thy Queen before thee stand,
 Her maidens too, on every hand,
 With Lethington, and many more
 920 Brave knights, thy chosen friends of yore,
 Who round thy couch in ardour press,
 To shew their love and friendliness.
 Aye ! e'en from Jeddart, far away,
 They came, their sovereign to obey,

But more by far it seemed to me,
 The secret joy of seeing thee
 Would prove to them more welcome sight
 Than their Queen's orders overnight
 Were to their ears ; until they knew
 930 That Hermitage was in my view,
 Then, when I spoke of thee, they all
 Came crowding round me, at my call.
 It made me, while in haste they ran,
 Wish I had been, like thee, a man."

A smile o'erspread Lord Bothwell's face,
 Reflected from her artless grace.
 Although with vain regret he sighed,
 As to her sallies he replied :
 " Beloved ruler ! happy they
 940 Who can thy wise behests obey,
 Without, like me, by fortune's tide,
 As wreckage, being cast aside,
 And pardon, as a dire mischance,
 That misdirected Border lance
 Should prove the hard, unbending fate
 That gave thee entrance at my gate
 Without the homage due to thee,
 From loyal hearts of mine and me.
 Believe me, only urgent need
 950 Restrained the will from being deed."

A sign, half play and half command,
 Was made towards him by her hand,
 Which caused him, with a look intense,
 To cease his knightly eloquence.
 While pointed finger emphasised
 The answer that her wit devised.
 " Cease, Bothwell, cease ! can I forget
 'Twas in my service that ye met
 This sore mishap, and to thy hand
 960 The credit lies, no reiver band
 Drew near us, as we southward bent,
 To cheer thy forced imprisonment.
 Nor made the faintest visage pale
 In what was lawless Liddesdale.
 Altho' with reivers in our van
 We rode to thee, since day began,

A Border chieftain at our side,
 To act the part of faithful guide ?
 But tell me, Bothwell, full and free,
 Of how the times have fared with thee.
 970 And Lethington will seat him here,
 To record make of what we hear.
 And rest assured, thy cause is mine.
 Nor for the past will I repine.
 But will befriend thee in thy need,
 Will meet each slander, shield each deed."

'Twas then she learned the soldier's tale
 Of all that passed in Liddesdale.
 Of Mangerton's and Elliot's death ;
 Of reivers slain upon the heath ;
 980 Of sack and pillage in the glen ;
 And all that had befallen his men.
 While in her turn, Queen Mary told
 Of how she gave to Armstrong bold
 His life, his pardon, freedom, power,
 For saving her in childhood's hour.
 And begged of Bothwell, in the end,
 To bring him near, and call him friend.
 The Earl was eager to forego
 All malice 'gainst him, by his foe,
 990 And ere a fleeting hour flew by
 Two hearts till then at enmity,
 Were, 'neath Queen Mary's winning smile,
 Not difficult to reconcile.

But ere, upon their homeward way,
 Set forth the Queen and her array
 Of courtiers, lords, and ladies fair,
 The festive board was spread to share
 The honours which a lonely vale
 Would pay to them, in Liddesdale.
 1000 And Bothwell, in a litter brought
 By loving hands and tender thought,
 In silence, till they went away,
 Amid the laughing courtiers, lay.
 While at the gate each neighing steed
 Betrayed his mettle and his breed.
 And each proud rider quickly sought
 His own, amid the horses brought.

- When to the Queen quoth Armstrong,
 "Hear me, my liege, the way is long,
 1010 The hills are stony, wide and steep.
 The marshes treacherous and deep.
 I once was useful at thy side
 When but a child, by Solway's tide,
 Permit me, once again, this day
 To see thee safely on thy way.
 Let thy sweet beauty glad mine eyes,
 As far, at least, as dim Penchrise.
 For there the miry slough is deep,
 1020 And troublesome the path to keep.
 Full well I know its winding ways,
 And he who for one moment strays
 Can never thro' in safety pass
 Its shifty, treacherous morass."
- A moment, smiling, gazed the Queen.
 Such loyalty, not often seen,
 Seemed cruelty to be denied,
 But bravely thus she quick replied.
 1030 "Brave Armstrong! here before we part,
 I thank thee for thy truth of heart,
 For not e'en once, unlike most men,
 Thine eyes have sought yon lonely glen,
 Where friend, relation, even wife
 Perchance, may wait to see, in life,
 Thee, all that's left to keep a grip
 Of ancient Border chieftainship.
 Nay, Borderer!—for who needs, must—
 I'll to my courtiers give my trust.
 They'll see me safe, nor one will fail,
 1040 Until I reach fair Jeddart vale.
 But take thou with thee these thy men,
 And seek yon sweet, sequestered glen,
 But ne'er forget, amid its shade,
 Thou homage to thy Queen hast paid.
 But there—I trust thee—in thine eyes
 The spark of true allegiance lies,
 From now and onwards to the end
 I count thee, Armstrong—as a friend."
- Too full for speech the chieftain stood,
 1050 But what to answer, if he could,

- His loyal heart ne'er let him know,
 For feeling made it overflow.
 Then doffing cap, he bent him low,
 In sight of all, once more to shew
 To courtier, soldier, foe, or friend,
 His reiving days were at an end.
 And raising to his lips her hand
 He, 'mid the nobles of the land,
 Imprinted, in his fervent way,
 The kiss of faith and fealty.
 Then raised himself, with stately bow
 To her who claimed him solely now,
 And called his troopers to his side,
 Bidding them each prepare to ride.
 While, seeking Bothwell's litter near,
 He clasped his hand as friend sincere,
 And said, "Farewell! I'll make amends,
 We part, my lord, as loyal friends.
 Farewell, my Queen! farewell to all.
 If need arise, upon me call.
 And, whether time be short or long,
 Trust still the faith of Armstrong."
 Again he bowed him to the ground,
 Then quickly southwards turned him round,
 And, 'mid his troopers, left and right
 He vanished from their watching sight.
 And ne'er again 'mid storm and stress,
 Was he Queen Mary's friend the less.
- But soon, upon its homeward way,
 Set forth the laughing train,
 Farewells were uttered, partings said,
 And vows renewed again.
 While heavy coursers pawed the ground
 And palfreys capered near,
 Queen Mary gave the word to move
 Which all were quick to hear.
 As, raising high her lily hand,
 A smile for all she found,
 And waved adieus to Bothwell and
 The troopers standing round.
 Then, with a final pirouette,
 Her mettled palfrey grey,
 Beneath her hand, with forward start,
 Began his homeward way.

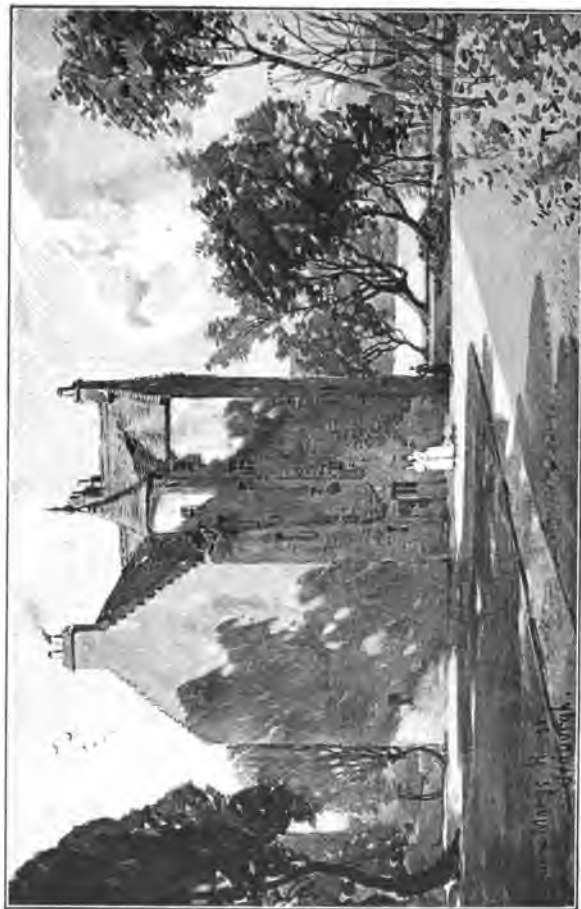
- With maids around, Queen Mary rode
 As tho' herself a maid.
 The cynosure of every eye
 In that bright cavalcade.
 The castle drawbridge swung aloft
 1100 Into its groove again.
 As onward paced the coursers, in
 Their gallop o'er the plain.
 And fainter to the watching eye,
 Each form at length appeared,
 As up the distant ridge they climbed,
 And to its crest they neared.
 A parting wave ! a faint halloo !
 To those in Hermitage.
 And answers, from its topmost tower,
 1110 Their listening ears engage.
 Then, o'er the summit, one and all,
 They vanish as they scale.
 For shades of night will gather ere
 They quit fair Teviotdale.

 And silence fell on Hermitage,
 A silence dull and grey.
 While Queen and courtier, maid and knight,
 Traversed their moorland way.
 And thought on Bothwell, left alone
 1120 With but his retinue,
 To fret perchance the lagging hour,
 But to his duty true.
 While wearying in pain, amid
 Forced inactivity.
 And longing for the day to leave
 His couch, and wander free.
 Yet conscious, 'mid it all, that now
 His Border work was o'er.
 For ne'er again might reiver rise
 1130 To trouble Scotland more.

 On, onward swung the cavalcade,
 A happy, laughing throng.
 Nor hillock, hollow, steep nor plain,
 Seemed tedious or long.
 But, with a free, light-hearted sweep,
 They paced their lonely way,

Nor saw the lengthening shadows creep
 From silver into grey,
 Until, in single file between
 1140 A marsh and brooklet's bed
 In sinuous course, they might be seen
 To follow where it led.
 Still, fearless and untrammelled, free
 Tho' danger might be near,
 They thought not of its verity,
 Nor knew the name of fear.
 But carolling along, with naught
 To check their merry lay,
 With smiles of unconcern, they sought
 1150 To keep the narrow way.

A gnat came by, on lazy wing,
 Upon his homeward course.
 And fitted 'mid the straggling string
 Of maids, and men, and horse.
 Selecting, as his lawful prey.
 The sleekest of his foes,
 He fixed upon the palfrey grey,
 Ere seeking his repose,
 And settled lightly on his ear,
 1160 Then stung, and flew afraid
 To see the wild commotion near
 He unconsciously had made.
 For, in a moment, rearing high,
 Nor heeding rein, nor guide,
 The palfrey pranced in agony
 The path, from side to side,
 Then, plunging wildly in his pain,
 In vain attempts to pass
 The others on the marshy plain,
 1170 He sank in the morass.
 Try as Queen Mary might to hold
 His bridle-rein and head,
 She was unseated when he rolled
 Upon the slimy bed,
 Where, wallowing, he sought to free
 Himself the path to gain.
 For terror, it was plain to see,
 Was added to his pain.
 His mistress, too, despite the will
 1180 Of all exerted round,



QUEEN MARY'S HOUSE.

- Was helpless in the moist embrace
 Of that soft, yielding ground.
 Till Seaton, 'mid her frenzied fear,
 Unloosed her guiding rein,
 And threw it to her mistress dear,
 Half sinking on the plain,
 While holding fast the nearer end,
 She slowly, gently drew
 Her from her peril, till she stood
 On ground more firm and true.
 1190 While Lethington, dismounted, tried,
 With many a pull and strain,
 To reach her palfrey in distress,
 And bring him near again.
 Until upon the narrow path
 At length both safely stood,
 'Mid now a chastened company,
 In far from laughing mood. (Note A.A.)
- But soon the lengthening shadows told
 1200 Of daylight fitting past.
 And on again the chargers rolled,
 To reach their homes at last.
 Penchrise and Priesthaugh left behind,
 The distant Great-moor-hill
 Kept aye their drear mishap in mind,
 As on they galloped still.
 Then Slitrig, Moat, and Minto's plain
 Were soon a passing tale,
 And darkness saw the tired train
 1210 O'erlooking Jedworth vale.
 And ere behind the wooded height
 Of Belvidere the moon
 Cast o'er the scene his chastened light,
 They reached fair "Jeddart Toon."
 And soon with all within its wall,
 'Mid silence calm and deep,
 From stable-loft to gilded hall,
 They sank in restful sleep.
- Aye! but not all. One anxious brain
 1220 With fitful fever burned.
 And seeking on her couch in vain
 For rest her head she turned.

- Not all the weight of Scotland's might,
 Not all its wealth and power,
 Could for its Queen this battle fight,
 Nor ease her darkened hour.
 A hectic flush on either cheek,
 And rapid shooting pains
 Thro' head and eyes, their warning gave
 1230 Of fever, in her veins.
 And eyes, unnaturally bright,
 Shone, 'mid the partial gloom
 Which one small lamp, with shaded light,
 Made deeper, in her room.
 Her maidens, roused from heavy sleep,
 With anxious look and sigh,
 Could barely from their mistress keep
 Each watchful, tear-dimmed eye.
 The leech, with cool, collected face,
 1240 Each symptom marked with care,
 While every spasm saw him brace
 His powers, her ills to dare.
 And thus she lay.

 With bated breath,
 A loyal nation stood
 Expectantly; when news were bad
 It sighed; and smiled when good.
 For tho' the seeds of discord lay
 Within its fertile ground,
 As yet dissension's fatal fruit
 1250 Lay dormant, though around.
 And loyal, sympathetic hearts,
 And loyal heads were seen,
 Whose only thoughts, and words, and deeds,
 Were steadfast to their Queen.

 The watchers in her darkened room
 Felt the near presence of the tomb.
 As, standing by, they prayed for grace,
 And watched the old physician's face.
 Three days had passed, and two long nights,
 1260 Since her brave heart had left the heights
 Of health and life, and now her breath
 Came sighing from the vale of death.
 Yet still they watched, for twice that day,
 Her spirit seemed to melt away. (Note A.B.)

And now with daylight nearly gone,
 The spark of life still dimly shone.
 The twilight came, the darkness fell,
 While, in the abbey's cloistered cell,
 The monks and abbot, on their knees,
 1270 Felt not the chill October breeze.
 As thro' the ancient oaks around,
 It sent its dismal, moaning sound
 Forth like the distant thunder's roll,
 Or knell for a departing soul.
 And still they prayed. While, in her room,
 Queen Mary's watchers peered the gloom,
 To catch her faint and struggling breath,
 While valiantly she fought with death.

A silence! was it come at last?
 1280 Her bright career cut short and past?
 O! could it be, her loving heart
 With theirs no more would bear its part?
 And must they with the morn confess
 Their infant prince was motherless?
 Yet no! a gasp, a sigh again,
 And still she lingered to her pain.
 Her maidens near, with tear-dimmed eyes,
 Strove hard to still their sobs and sighs,
 And while they knelt to weep and pray,
 Their well-loved Queen unconscious lay,
 1290 Unknowing all the love and tears,
 Unheeding all the hopes and fears,
 Unmindful of the hearts that bled,
 Around her couch and aching head.

Then, when the hour of dawn drew nigh,
 A gentle gleam o'erspread the sky.
 As, from the east, a soothing ray
 Sped o'er the vale caressingly.
 And, when the watchers, in their fear,
 Each to the other drawing near,
 1300 When heart and strength were all but 'sped,
 When hopes were withering or dead,
 A sound was borne—a gentle sigh—
 Soft as a prayer ascending high,
 Faint as the dawning's melting light,
 A sigh, long-drawn, like spirit's flight.

- Then, like a shadow, from her side,
 They saw her old physician glide.
 He whispered, "Come! no longer weep,
 1310 The Queen shall live. She is asleep."
 And tho' his message might be brief,
 To heavy hearts, O what relief!
 Their prayers were answered now. At last
 The fever fought, the crisis past.
 And thankful hearts, that autumn morn,
 Found rest and peace with day new-born.
 And she, on whom Death's portal threw
 Its shadow grim, returned anew,
 1320 Back from that stream with slippery sides,
 Whose current earth and heaven divides;
 Back once again her spirit moved,
 To wills that served, and hearts that loved.
- Beneath her tower, the sloping lawn
 Smiled up each morn to kiss the dawn,
 While stretching onward free and broad,
 To clasp the river, as it flowed,
 By sheltered nooks, by gnarled trees,
 By plots still blooming sped the bees,
 And oft the hanging flowers betrayed
 1330 The secret arbour's hidden shade.
 And here at noon might oft be seen
 The couch whereon lay Scotland's Queen.
 While, like the planets round the sun,
 Her maids revolved, by walk or run,
 Each striving, in her work and play,
 To show her love and constancy.
 'Twas love that made them glad and bright,
 'Twas love that made their labours light.
 The Queen reclined beneath the trees,
 1340 Fanned by the cooling harvest breeze,
 Lulled by the murmuring wavelets' play,
 As classic Jed rolled on its way.
 A smiling sun its brightest sheen
 Shot thro' the gently fading green.
 And seemed but envious to share
 The halo of her golden hair.
 When sending all her maids away,
 An hour to leisure or to play,
 Save one, the sweetest of them all,
 1350 Who stayed to hear her faintest call,

She roused herself, and sought her aid
To lead her from her covert shade.

- “ Pray, lead me, Seaton, to the river’s brink,
Far from the buzz of courtiers, and of men.
And, as I lean upon thee, let me think
Of naught but of thy beauty, and of when
I’ll yield thee to the arms of one—nay, turn (*Note A.C.*)
Not thus away thy well-loved face from me,
Nor let the tell-tale blush thy forehead burn,
1360 As if a secret lay ’twixt me and thee !—
Why, Seaton, since these days at Inchmahome,
It seems as tho’ a century had fled. (*Note A.D.*)
And still thou’rt by my side, where’er I roam,
To help my cause, and soothe my throbbing head.
O ! mind’st thou of the mimic courts we held,
On Tana’s Isle, when Erskine was our guide,
When queens were crowned, and no one e’er rebelled,
And thou wert Francis, and I was your bride ? ”

- 1370 The Queen’s voice faltered in its flow,
As tho’ her heart yet felt the blow
Which severed from her youthful life
The first who call’d her queen and wife,
And from those eyes that yet could move
An arm to fight, or heart to love,
Fell silently, for bygone years
In well-loved France—a flood of tears.
But Seaton brought her roving mind,
With all its memories entwined,
By gentle touch, and soothing way,
1380 Across the bridge of Time : with sway
So gentle, and with heart so true,
She spoke of hopes, not fears, anew.
That soon the Queen’s sad eyes were bright,
And tears were gone, and heart was light,
While as they sat beside the stream
In autumn’s sun awhile to dream,
And while the laughing wavelets played,
The Queen to Seaton sweetly said :

- “ Bring, fairest Seaton, bring, I pray,
1390 Your tuneful lyre, and let some lay
Of love or chivalry

Brighten this quiet mid-day hour.
 Call forth thy best from music's power
 In thy sweet winning way.

Methinks, like Saul of old, some shade
 O'erclouds my way. But music laid
 His evil spirit low.

1400 So speed, fair maid, the sweetest tale
 That e'er was whispered in the vale,
 A tale of weird or woe,

Of coward knave, or dashing knight,
 Of maiden's grave, or hard-won fight,
 Or yet, perchance of love,

For no sweet voice can still my care
 Like thine, nor other tunes can e'er
 My inmost spirit move."

1410 Not fleeter could the bounding roe
 Across the heathy moorland go,
 Than Seaton, in her love, displayed
 In seeking, in an arbour's shade,
 And bringing to Queen Mary's side,
 Her lyre, with purple ribbons tied.
 While tuning, in her artless way,
 Its strings to suit her minstrelsy,
 Then, nestling at her mistress' feet,
 In tones so wondrous pure and sweet,
 That even the murm'ring water's play
 Was tuned into her melody,
 Her voice arose in all its power,
 1420 To soothe Queen Mary's pensive hour.
 And, where its silv'ry tones were found
 Awoke the sleeping echoes sound.

"Were I a flower
 In sunny bower
 I would ope mine eye.
 As to the morning,
 For thy adorning,
 Pluck, and let me die.

1430 "Were I a lark, high
 Up in the blue sky.
 Would I trill my lays.
 • Ever ascending,
 Yet never ending,
 Only in thy praise.

" Were I a rainbow,
 Where thou would'st deign go,
 Ever by thee led.
 All the world over,
 Like halo, cover
 1440 But thy radiant head.

" Were I a smile, dear !
 And all the while, dear !
 Chasing sorrow's sighs.
 Then, when asleep, dear !
 Gently I'd creep, dear !
 Into thy sweet eyes.

" Were I a bright thought,
 With heaven's light fraught,
 E'en of love a part,
 1450 Straight from mine own, dear !
 I'd bring my throne, dear !
 Into thy dear heart."

A moment's silence, then a sigh
 Was all that spoke her presence nigh.
 Until with queenly grace and air,
 She placed her hand 'mid Seaton's hair,
 And smiling in her upturned face,
 Pressed back her truant locks in place,
 And thanked her as she only could,
 1460 For love in all her solitude.
 " Fair Seaton ! can I ever shew
 How much I to my maidens owe !
 Thou, Fleming, Beaton, Livingstone. . . (Note A.E)
 Four hearts, that seem to beat as one.
 Four lives, devoted, loving, true,
 Which every hour attests anew.
 Or can I e'er make clearly known
 The worth of love, love like thine own ?
 And how in many a painful hour,
 1470 Hast thou made manifest thy power ?
 Far more hast thou than woman's share
 Of patience, tenderness, and care.
 Else, how in sorrow's darksome time,
 Hast thy sweet spirit soared sublime
 Above them all, and to the plain
 Brought comfort, smiling in its train ?

Or from the valley of despair,
 When hearts were bleeding, broken, bare,
 Hast thou with solace, sure and strong,
 1490 Soothed all our sorrows with thy song?
 Sing once again, sweet maid, I pray,
 And charm my heaviness away.
 A song of calm, a song of peace,
 Of love that will not fail nor cease.
 Of heart so full of tenderness
 That naught will make it trust the less.
 And let me think, unheard, unseen,
 Dear maid, of all that might have been."
 A moment Seaton seemed to dream,
 1490 And watch the eddies of the stream,
 As tho' the cloisters of her mind
 Hid some sweet song she strove to find,
 But smiling, tho' her mind concealed,
 It soon was to her heart revealed.
 When high she raised her tuneful lays,
 In one of Nature's melodies.

"When the surge of the waters
 Runs in from the sea,
 And the white, foaming billows
 1500 Rush on in their glee,
 When the noise of the breakers
 Resounds from the shore,
 And the scream of the seagull
 Is heard thro' the roar
 Of the wind and the tempest,
 And fast-driving spray.
 And the huge rocks, like pebbles,
 Dance round as in play.
 When the moan of the gale,
 1510 While angry waves roll,
 Rings out, like the wail
 At the wreck of a soul.
 O! then, like the breath of a flower,
 O! then, like a sweet dream of peace.
 Comes a vision of thee, love!
 A-whisp'ring to me, love!
 And bidding my turmoil to cease.

"When the wavelets are glancing,
 As, smiling, they dash,

- 1520 And reflecting the sunbeams
 In sparkle and flash,
 On the white, shining pebbles,
 Or smooth, sloping sand,
 Which fringes like girdle,
 The glittering strand ;
 When the azure of heaven,
 And green of the sea,
 Co-mingle to picture
 An eternity.
- 1530 When the gulls in their rapture,
 By wavelet caressed,
 In ocean's safe keeping
 Repose on its breast.
 O ! then, like the sun on the wavelet,
 Reflected in shade or in shine ;
 Or the cloud, high in space,
 Looking down on its face
 In the waters, be my love and shine."
- 1540 The singer ceased, but echoes' throats
 Prolonged her wondrous melting notes.
 While breeze and river hushed their sighs
 To listen to her melodies.
 And only when the echoes died,
 In whispers each to each replied.
 And vied which might the best prolong
 The sequence of her lovely song.
 No word as yet Queen Mary spoke,
 And only breeze and stream awoke
 What peaceful sounds smote on the ear,
 When, on fair Seaton's hand, a tear
 Fell softly like a drop of dew
 Upon a parched flower anew,
 She quickly sought her mistress' gaze,
 Partly in sorrow, part amaze.
- 1550 But, when she met her sovereign's eyes,
 The gleams of pleasure and surprise
 She pictured there were more of praise
 Than words could tell or sighs could raise.
 While quivering on her lashes fair,
 Were crystal drops, and mirrored there
 She saw, not sorrow waked from sleep,
 But hope and pleasure make her weep.

- 'Twas thus Queen Mary spent each hour,
 Like Queen Titania in her bower.
 Till pallid brow grew fair and bright,
 And blue eyes gleamed with changing light.
 While all the love that round her smiled,
 And lonesome hours by song beguiled,
 Brought slowly back to cheeks and lips
 The roses from their past eclipse.
 1570 And smiles, but lately wan and sad,
 Were soon with flowers of pleasure clad.
 And eyes that seemed to droop and weep,
 Showed soon emotion pure and deep,
 While fragile form and pale, sweet face
 Regained their symmetry and grace.
- When in her harbour's sweet retreat,
 With Seaton nestling at her feet,
 She told her, in some legend old,
 1580 Of guarded castle, champion bold,
 Who sought to win his lady fair
 In spite of warders, guardian's care,
 Or irate father, war's alarms,
 Mailed horsemen, too, and men at arms,
 Upon their listening ears the sounds
 Of voices from the further grounds
 Fell unawares. Fair Seaton stood
 To see who there would dare intrude,
 "Why! who is this, whose queasy look
 1590 Would little contradiction brook?
 Whose forward manners, too, but pay
 Your privacy scant courtesy?
 Surely ere this the courtiers know
 Your leisure, which they must forego,
 Until, with full returning strength,
 Your hours are theirs, tho' breadth and length,
 Alone he comes, with meaning gaze
 On those who cross his haughty ways,
 See! Beaton shrinks before his look—
 1600 'Tis long since she such umbrage took—
 See, too, that Lethington, in haste,
 Strives to o'ertake him ere he waste
 His time within your private grounds,
 O'erstepping thus a courtier's bounds.
 He cannot surely be so rude
 As on your privacy intrude!



DARNLEY.

Why ! Lethington, too, comes this way,
 Conversing with him laughingly."
 Then, starting with a sudden shake,
 1610 Too late she saw her strange mistake.
 " Why !—can it be—Your Majesty !
 I knew him not—forgive, I pray."
 And Seaton, blushing, turned to fly,
 As Lennox, Mary's spouse, drew nigh. (*Note A.F.*)
 But, at her mistress' sign, remained.
 Tho', only thus, was she restrained.
 For fearing she her trust abused,
 She waited, stammering, confused,
 While Lethington, her doting slave,
 1620 Proved it by every glance he gave.

Queen Mary's smile had died away,
 Her face was now an ashen grey,
 As, in a semi-sober state,
 Her husband came with swaggering gait,
 His heavy lips, and sunken eyes—
 More used to drunk soliloquies
 Than paying, as they should have been,
 Court to his beauteous wife and Queen—
 Were now inflamed. His words were lame,
 1630 And with a maudlin accent came.
 His whole demeanour churlish, mean,
 Scarce fit to stand beside his Queen.
 When, in his clumsy, sotted way,
 He sought to treat her tenderly,
 With sudden lurch, his shaking frame
 'Twixt Lethington and Mary came.
 But, with a stagger, aiming wide,
 He fell against the arbour's side,
 And looking round, prepared to storm,
 1640 Saw but her fast-retreating form.
 For she, without a word to say,
 Took Seaton's arm and led the way
 From out the arbour. Calm and still,
 A power subdued by force of will.
 And at her husband looking round,
 Beheld him sprawling on the ground.
 While Lethington, in his dismay,
 Knew not his place to go or stay.

Ill-mated wife ! Ill-fated queen !
 1650 The fate of empires might have been
 Changed from a course of sin and shame
 Hadst thou ne'er known false Darnley's name.
 And lovers of thy truth and grace
 Lament that ere his sensuous face
 Encountered thine. E'en Dudley's birth (*Note A.G.*)
 Might have condoned his Kenilworth.
 Nor could Elizabeth but curse
 Thy choice. For nothing known is worse
 Than Lennox' fateful impotence.
 1660 A creature but the slave of sense.
 No mate for such a soul as thine,
 For when did pure with soiled combine
 To make a picture otherwise
 Than thy sad fate to our sad eyes.

With steady step, and flashing eye,
 Queen Mary sought for privacy
 Within her chambers, from the first
 Lent her by Ker of Fernihurst. (*Note—A.H.*)
 And, with fair Seaton by her side,
 1670 Reclined to wait what might betide,
 And dreamt that here she might be free
 From Lennox' importunity.
 But clamour round her outer gate
 Proved she was not inviolate.
 And boisterous tones continuously
 Arose around his hindered way.
 Until, with smothered oath and fume,
 He found himself within her room,
 Still storming at his forced delay,
 1680 And, what he called, discourtesy.

" A pretty way, in sooth, my lady shews
 Of proving what in honest truth she owes
 To all the heavy riding, for her sake,
 I've done since morning bid the dawn awake.
 Instead of welcome, here I find a frown,
 As if, indeed, my wife were not my own.
 And from herself a hard, repelling way,
 I' faith, the opposite of courtesy.
 But I will shew her—Hark ye ! Seaton, go !
 1690 When thou art wanted I will let thee know.

Thou movest not ! Hence, minx ! at once obey !
Else I will shew thee how I force my way."

- But now Queen Mary's eyes were flashing, bright
With changing colour and a dang'rous light.
"Know, Darnley !" quick she cried, "my maidens wait
On my decrees alone, and what the State
Or thee concerns they will not care, nor know.
And only when I ask them may they go—
But," turning round to Seaton standing near,
1700 "Lest he say aught unfit for maiden's ear,
Go seek, sweet Seaton, in the inner hall,
Thy fair companions, but remain in call.—
And now, Lord Lennox, we are quite alone,
So see if thy arrangements suit mine own,
For do not look for much of courtesy,
Or help, or pleasuring, from mine or me,
For nigh two moons have waned, and in this place
'Tis only now I look upon thy face.
All husbands such as thou are happier hence
1710 From wives they do not love nor reverence.
So state thy needs, and quickly also, lest
My leech should call me to my daily rest."

Darnley—"And may I not, your husband, touch your hand,
Or kneel, like subject, at your regal feet ?
Or do you bid me like a servant stand,
To pass your courtiers' dishes while they eat ?
Or make me hold your bridle, or maybe
You'd have me cook, or scullion—"

Mary—"Darnley, cease !

- Ye add but to my fever : speak to me
1720 As husband should, or pray thee hold thy peace,
My temples throb yet. On my weary ears
Thou pour'st thy fancied grievances in vain ;
Wert thy heart braver, fewer idle fears
Would then beset thy too suspicious brain.
The husband of a queen, I trow, should be
A leader among men, collected, cool.
A prince, so far above suspicion free,
The strongest dare not use him as a tool.
And yet thy friends but use thee as they list,
1730 Intriguers and my enemies employ
Thee at their need, then round their fingers twist,
And throw aside like children's broken toy."

Darnley—"Aye! call me coward!—coward to my face!
 And vaunt thy champions in thy husband's eyes.
 Heap up thine insults! There is no disgrace
 In jeering at the man thou dost despise."

Mary—"I charge thee, Darnley, curb thine arrant tongue.
 Thou see'st taunts where none are meant to be.
 But if, in friendship, words of mine have stung,
 1740 Maybe it is their *truth* appeals to thee.
 Thou knewest thy wife was sick—deny it not!
 Ill deeds with fair words canst thou reconcile?—
 Yet for two moons her couch thou hast not sought.
 Perchance thou thought'st it was not worth thy while.
 Confess it! had she died, thy plotted schemes
 Were all matured in thy ambitious brain,
 And now, alas! into the realm of dreams
 They, for a time at least, are gone again?
 Ah! thou art silent! I have guessed aright!
 1750 Cursed be the day my trusting heart was won!
 What thinkest thou of that poor husband's plight,
 Who plots against the mother of his son?"

Darnley—"Tis false, my Queen! my sense was so amazed
 I could not for the moment frame reply.
 Pray think me not so abject, so abased,
 So sunk within the gulf of perfidy,
 As e'er to scheme against thy power and name.
 My plans were made but for our son alone,
 For his protection, should the fatal hour
 1760 Have sounded which would place him on the throne.

Mary—"Lennox, thou liest! why these armed hosts
 Recruited from thy vassals in the West?
 Why! even yet, thy courier's empty boasts
 Ring in mine ears. Fulfilling thy behests,
 He tried to tempt my Lethington with bribes.
 Forgetting on my couch that I was near,
 And in my person sought by jeers and gibes
 To make my court ridiculous appear.
 He spoke of Ruthven, Lindsay, and the rest;
 1770 Of Highlanders, all ready at your call.
 Dost think me mad? or is thy plaint a jest?
 Or dost imagine vengeance cannot fall?
 Wert thou aught but my husband, dungeon deep
 Or gallows-tree would keep thy worthless head,

For all the love I strove for thee to keep,
Has long since been betrayed, and bruised, and dead."

As spoke the Queen, his head in fear
Sank lower on his beast,
For little recked he thus to hear
1780 His infamy confessed.
And least of all, that she alone
Should all his plans have read,
From whom he hoped to wrest the throne,
And reign as king instead.
His nervous face twitched in dismay,
Clasped and unclasped his hands.
He faltered, stammered, turned away,
Or trussed his silken bands
To hide his shame. Queen Mary smiled,
1790 Yet sighed to think that she
Was once so easily beguiled
By insincerity.
Then, in an agony of fear,
And supplicating tones,
His terror was at least sincere,
As were his sighs and groans.

Darnley—"Pardon, my Queen! oh! pardon give
Once more; forgive, I crave.
Argyle was leader, as I live, (Note—A.K.)
1800 And all directions gave.
I, foiled, defeated, and betrayed,
Was urged against my will
To take a part—and that I played
With little fence or skill.
For in my heart of hearts thou art
My wife, altho' my Queen.
And tho' I pledged to act my part,
Yet wouldst thou still have seen
My loyalty and love for thee—
1810 Am I so much to blame?
Thy beauty still o'ermasters me—
No peril near thee came."

While thus he vainly would condone
His treachery, the Queen
With flashing eye, imperious grown,
And proud and regal mien,

Poured forth the vials of her wrath
 On his devoted head,
 And cursed the day when o'er her path
 1830 His treacherous feet had sped.

Mary—"Cease, Lennox, cease! would'st thou draw near
 With coward lies, and bid me hear
 Thy froward, prating tongue
 Blame others for thy vile misdeeds,
 With added lies to meet thy needs
 As ever forth they sprung?
 I tell thee, thou wert traitor then,
 And sought to lead far abler men,
 E'en tho' they traitors prove
 1830 To thine own wife. And would'st thou come
 And name of thy misdeeds the sum
 By speaking of thy love?
 Speak not to me, false, craven heart,
 Of love—ye know the baser part.
 Thy love is but desire!
 Of that pure, living, holy flame
 Thou knowest nothing, save the name,
 Nor felt its sacred fire.
 Methought a husband's joy would be
 1840 To love, in all sincerity,
 The wife his tongue had sought;
 Methought her sorrows he would share,
 And try to light her dark despair.
 His duty—is it not?
 Ye craved my love, ye praised my face,
 Ye said ye loved my truth and grace,
 All this thy tongue declared,
 And that it was myself alone
 Ye sought—alas! it was my throne
 1850 For which alone ye cared.
 And that would I have gladly shared
 Aye! e'en resigned—had I but dared—
 To one I loved, and now
 I have but warmed a serpent vile,
 Which with a sting repays my smile,
 By wedding such as thou!"

Each heaving gasp, like stabbing lance,
 A deep emotion thrilled,

- And almost choked her utterance,
 1860 With grief and sorrow filled.
 While he, abashed, abased, disgraced,
 Sat listless, overcome,
 O'erwhelmed, his confidence misplaced.
 Ashamed, inert, and dumb.
 How happy with so fair a Queen,
 This beauteous, tender flower,
 Had even he, the dotard, been
 With tithe of manly power.
 Instead of at her feet, despised,
 1870 A felon, at her side
 He might have stood, a husband prized,
 And worthy of his bride.
 Her bosom still too well betrayed,
 By fevered fall and rise,
 The fear on which her tremor preyed ;
 And in her flashing eyes
 The triumph-light could not be hid,
 Where love-light oft had basked,
 Nor could be stilled the quivering lid
 1880 Which treachery unmasked.
 Her every motion spoke of power,
 A mastery attained
 But recently, within an hour,
 But power once more regained.
 For by her sifting and her tact,
 His character untrue
 Shewed what was fiction, what was fact,
 Indeed, all that he knew,
 And gave his so-called plans away,
 1890 With secret names between ;
 And Scotland saw a husband play
 The traitor to its Queen.

- The arras which she caused divide
 Her night and day rooms, thrown aside,
 Admitted to their anxious sight
 The old physician. 'Gainst the light,
 He seemed an old decrepid man,
 But closer, tho' his cheek was wan
 And pale, an eager, restless eye
 1900 Proclaimed this man of mystery,
 Tho' old in years, still sharp and keen,
 The chief physician to the Queen ;

- Was jealous of his occult lore
 And of the title which he bore.
 "Your grace," he said, "must pardon me
 For this exceeding liberty,
 But that your grace may soon be blest
 With health, I counsel needful rest,
 And dare not further ask this day
 1910 That my Lord Darnley now should pay
 The homage e'en from husband due,
 Belovèd, honoured Queen, to you."
 Then bowing to Lord Darnley low,
 He waited him to rise and go,
 But, treating with disdain his look,
 No notice of it Lennox took.
 The leech in patience waited on,
 Expecting Darnley to be gone,
 But lest a fracas should be seen,
 1920 And fearing to annoy the Queen,
 He bowed him slowly at her feet,
 When, rising from her cushioned seat,
 She took his arm and passed behind
 The arras, as tho' out of mind
 She meant to put her husband's face,
 And left him sitting in his place.
 Her old physician stood to see
 Her maids rush round her lovingly,
 Then smiling round to one and all,
 1930 He loosed the arras to its fall.
 But as he reached again the room,
 Out sprang Lord Darnley from the gloom,
 And sought to force his sulky way
 Behind the arras. "Move, I pray!"
 He shouted to the aged man,
 Who in his wonder stopped to scan
 The angry face of him who'd dare
 Approach the Royal presence there.
 "Here, move, I say! Upon my life!
 1940 You'd think the Queen was not my wife."
 He thundered at the old man's ear,
 As tho' he could not see nor hear.
 But not a muscle left its place,
 Upon the old physician's face.
 "My lord!" he said in quiet tones,
 "'Tis I, her leech, who humbly owns

- The life of her, for whom I pray
 That she may live for many a day."
 But Darnley, in his livid hate,
 1950 His passion wrought to such a state,
 With foaming mouth and quivering lid,
 Knew hardly what he said or did,
 But seized the old man by the throat,
 And, tho' he strained, released it not,
 Until he tried to make his way
 To where the Queen prostrated lay;
 But as he touched the arras screen
 Which sheltered, with her maids, the Queen,
 He for a moment lost his grasp,
 1960 And falling, scarce had time to gasp,
 Ere from the corridor with speed
 Three soldiers answered to the need
 Of the physician, still on guard,
 Who bundled Lennox to the yard,
 And left him cursing in his rage,
 Trying to prove his lineage.
 They intimated that at noon
 Next day he might reclaim the boon
 Of waiting at the chamber door
 1970 To be presented. Many more
 Already there had sought to be
 Included in that company.

 Next morn at dawn they sought aright
 To learn where Lennox spent the night,
 But he had gone ere break of day,
 And soon was miles upon his way.
 A traitor first, a coward next,
 His childish soul was hurt and vexed
 1980 Because the Queen his projects knew,
 Because his plot had fallen thro'.
 So, like a petted child that cries
 When he secures not all he tries,
 And when a fall has hurt his pride,
 He sulked at his fond father's side.

 A sleepless night the Queen had spent,
 For naught could still her anxious breast,
 And tho' her maids their voices lent
 To soothe and lull her to her rest,
 'Twas all in vain. For on her mind
 1990 Was Lennox' cruel, heartless deed,

And caring not how cold, unkind,
 His conduct in her woman's need,
 A hundred loving hearts beat round,
 Yet his, who should have loved her best,
 Was, of them all that could be found,
 The one with "self" alone as guest.

2000 The light had long since filled the sky,
 And flooded with its golden ray
 Her sleepless couch and fevered eye,
 Proclaiming thus another day.
 Their restless task her maids pursued,
 Nor thought amiss their loving toil,
 For every Royal thought construed
 Meant but a wish in waiting soil.
 "Leave me, I pray." The Queen expressed
 Her wish in accents slow but clear,
 And even those who loved her best
 Quitted her room, but hovered near,
 Perchance to seek their lost repose,
 2010 Or food within the maidens' hall,
 Or on the lawn smell Autumn's rose,
 But near enough to hear her call.
 Alone, the Queen lay back and sighed,
 While visions of the past beguiled,
 She closed her eyes, and vainly tried
 To keep her thoughts from running wild.
 For memory was busy still,
 And past and present in her breast
 Sought mastery against her will,
 2020 The strife would not be laid to rest.

"Ah! why did Francis die? What fate
 Deprived me of my earliest love?
 As children at the convent gate
 We used to meet, then onward move
 Thro' all its courts and cloisters grey,
 And, hand in hand, with childish glee,
 Would in its very dungeons play,
 Unknown to fear or enmity.
 Our elders looked on us and smiled,
 2030 And we, oblivious to care,
 Played on, and happy hours beguiled,
 Young, innocent, and free as air.

- Then as the years flew past, we still—
 Our lives one sweet and vernal spring—
 As lovers, wandered at our will,
 And thought on what the years might bring.
 Our fairy castles built on high,
 Of power, of influence, of might;
 Too large for earth, they pierced the sky,
 But love was aye the guiding light.
- 2040 And then that lovely April day!
 When to his manly heart he drew
 Me blushing, kissing them away.
 Methought that even heaven's blue
 Was lustreless beside his eyes,
 As, gazing—wondrous tender grown—
 He called me wife. No sunlit skies
 Have ever since so sweetly shone.
- 2050 As king, too, how he used to plan
 To make me happy, honoured, great.
 Tender as woman, yet a man
 In councils or affairs of state.
 Alas! he drooped! The hectic flush
 O'erspread his cheek by slow degrees.
 In vain by will he sought to crush
 The progress of his dire disease.
 How soon the end! One heart alone
 Beat faithful, true, while life's last glow
 Flickered and fled—and he was gone!
- 2060 O fatal vaults of Chenonceaux! (Note—A.L.)
 My mother gone, my Francis dead, (Note—A.M.)
 In one sad year this lot was mine.
 Oh! that with them I, too, had sped,
 The last of all the Stuart line.
 Seven Royal kings of Stuart blood
 Before me sat on Scotia's throne, (Note—A.N.)
 And stern Misfortune's sternest mood
 Pursued relentlessly each one.
 My father's weird! O, fatal name!
- 2070 He said 'that Scotland's bitterest woe
 With Royal Stuart woman came,
 And with another it would go.' (Note—A.O.)
 I was a bride, Queen, widow, ere
 Full many a maid has felt the pang
 Of wakened love. O grim despair!
 I would with his my knell had rang.

For why, amid this scheming crew,
 Must I, a woman, brave them all ?
 Oh ! for a manly heart and true
 2090 To hold each plotting brain in thrall !
 Oh ! for a Ruthven's temper grim,
 For Moray's busy, scheming head,
 For Bothwell's fire and strength of limb,
 For Rizzio's brain back from the dead.
 I'd rid me of the rancorous throngs
 Who fawn upon me with their wiles,
 And seek, to right their so-called wrongs,
 Their sovereign's countenance and smiles ;
 Yet, when she calls on them to stand
 2095 Around her in the evil day,
 How few respond to her demand !
 How many seek to turn away !
 I'd banish half my courtiers hence,
 Were I but sure the rest were true,
 And round would meet for my defence.
 I'd send Elizabeth a few—
 A few in France would do no wrong—
 Let Lennox sulk 'mid Arran's rocks—
 2100 The Bass for Huntley, safe and strong.
 Tantallon for the bigot Knox.
 And liberty of thought for all,
 Each sect to worship as it will ;
 Each homestead safe as castle-wall,
 And clamour cease, and strife be still.

Dreams ! idle dreams ! alas, I know
 How vain my thoughts, as to and fro
 They flit and fly.
 Ambition, jealousy, and pride,
 2110 With vain deceit, go side by side
 With enmity.
 And what can wit, e'en woman's, gain,
 When matched against the cunning train
 Of foes like these ?
 And who would queenly word compare
 With armed might ? They even dare
 Do as they please !
 Had Lennox been a man, the power
 Of Scotland's throne in evil hour
 Would stem the tide

- 2120 Of all who raised a voice or arm
 With will or power to do it harm,
 Or force aside.
 But now, with Lennox but a fool,
 Of stronger men the foil and tool,
 Can I endure ?
 Oppressed by those who mar or break,
 Can I alone uphold and make
 The throne secure ? ”
- 2130 A valet entered soft and slow. (*Note—A.P.*)
 A servant trusty, tried and true.
 “ Your grace,” he said, “ there waits below
 A knight would crave an interview.”
 “ Who comes,” Queen Mary cried, “ alone
 I seek repose to clear my brain,
 Yet scarce can call an hour my own
 But some one comes. Is’t Deloraine ? ”
 “ ’Tis not, your grace ! In litter borne,
 And, like a spectre, wan and pale,
 Lord Bothwell left but yester morn
 The Hermitage in Liddesdale.”
- 2140 “ Send Seaton here,” the Queen replied,
 “ And any other you may find,
 For gossips find on every side
 An idle tale in every wind.
 Bring Bothwell in—a noble knight.
 Would servants all were such as he !
 Then feuds were easier to right,
 And fewer knaves at liberty.”
- 2150 Lord Bothwell entered, bowing low,
 Not often was he thus so meek,
 As but the shade of long ago,
 He waited for the Queen to speak.
 She looked a moment and no more,
 And yet her woman’s eye took in
 His pallid face, the look he wore
 Of feebleness, his hand so thin,
 His shrunken form, his listless eye,
 His air of lassitude, his mien—
 So reckless once—spoke misery.
- 2160 She knew he bore it for his Queen.
 “ Be seated, Bothwell ! Seaton, pray,
 A glass of wine, place at his hand.

I did not dream, my lord, this day
To see thee here before me stand."

"My Queen," he said, in muffled voice,
"I would my deep respects have paid
Long weeks ago, but now rejoice
That they before thy feet are laid.
2170 My wound grew cankered, and my blood
Was fevered like a raging flame,
And in my distant solitude,
Methought my Queen forgot my claim—
My claim to knighthood, and my breast
Was riven with the jealous fear
I was forgotten, 'mid the rest
Of those who sought her list'ning ear.
Then came a servant with the news—
The news that caused my blood to chill!
Oh! what if Scotland were to lose
2180 Its Queen? My very heart stood still!
I strove to leave my couch and find
The truth of what I feared to hear.
But fainting fell, my heart and mind
Dead to the world of pain and fear.
Then came your message, gracious Queen
I read it with a thrill of pride.
Had strength of will sufficient been,
I had been near you, by your side,
To prove, despite a weakened arm,
2190 A rusting blade, an aching head,
My power to keep my Queen from harm,
Until disease and pain had fled."

"My lord!" Queen Mary sweetly said,
"Thy prowess is well known to all,
Thou hast for country fought and bled,
But suffered not its cause to fall.
I knew that Liddesdale was sure,
With thou, its warden, still alive.
And Teviotdale has wrought my cure,
2200 Howe'er the adverse Fates might strive.
So now my duty calls me forth
To hold again the reins of power,
And shew my country what of worth
Is left me from my evil hour.

My lord ! I know thy zeal and care.
 Thy power of will is felt and seen,
 And all that thou wilt do or dare
 Wilt be alone for State and Queen."

2210 "My Queen," Lord Bothwell quickly said,
 "Count not the trials I can bear,
 Nor think the blood I gladly shed
 Worth mentioning, if I but share
 The passing thought that flits across
 The queenly passage of thy mind.
 My life itself were scarcely loss
 If thy remembrance was kind.
 So, therefore, in whate'er befalls
 Thy lot, my Queen, or mine, thy slave !
 Know that to me this night recalls
 2220 The Oath of Loyalty I gave
 Long, long ago, but ever now
 Its purpose is more sure to me.
 Again, till deathdew clouds my brow,
 My life, my Queen, I give to thee."

"Thanks, Bothwell, thanks ! I do not ask
 Thy death, but for my sake to live !
 Think not I try to weight the task,
 But lighten it, and courage give.
 Alone my aim to point above
 2230 The fleeting fancies of the day,
 To liberty—to life—to love—
 And shew to heavy hearts *The Way*.
 Go, now, my lord ! seek needed rest,
 For morning speeds us on our ways,
 Thou south ; I, north. We are at best
 Dice thrown by unseen Destinies,
 And therefore, in the grasp of Fate,
 Must we th' allotted tasks pursue
 Reserved for each—To raise the state
 2240 Or the reserve—My lord, adieu !"

There was trampling of horses,
 And cheering of men,
 And laughter and shouting
 Again and again
 Increasing in volume,
 Or dying away,

But ever repeating,
 That bright autumn day.
 Why ! why the commotion,
 2250 The uproar, the sound,
 The crowding and laughing
 That seemed to abound ?
 The Queen was departing,
 Forgotten her pain.
 While smilingly watching
 Her gallants and train.
 Her knights and her horsemen
 In glitt'ring array.
 Her sweet maids of honour,
 2260 Her nobility.
 All vieing around her,
 From smallest to great,
 Her thoughts and her wishes
 To anticipate.
 Her soldiers had gathered
 With sword, bow and lance,
 In order they waited
 Her sign to advance.
 But, 'mid the confusion
 2270 Of shout and of call,
 The Queen on her valfrev
 Sat viewing it all.
 She smiled as she noted
 The strenuous care
 All took for her safety,
 While each bore his share.
 Around her were ladies
 Of birth and of name,
 With those who had been her
 2280 Escort since she came.
 Each anxious to bid her
 "God speed" on her way,
 And shew all her love, and
 Her sweet loyalty.
 But soon all was ready,
 Each man in his place,
 The Queen's ladies round her,
 The centre of grace.
 And all that remained was
 2290 A friendly adieu,

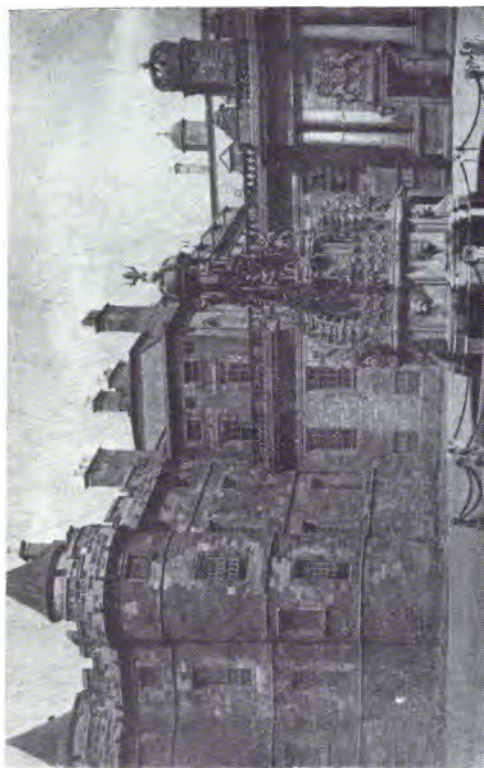
"To those of her friends who
Had proved they were true.

"Adieu, my Lady Ker ! adieu !
Thy loyalty of heart anew
Is amply proved. And if our stay,
All unforeseen from day to day,
Has longer proved than what it should,
Accept a sovereign's gratitude. (Note A.R.)
Beneath thy friendly sheltering roof,
2300 Has physic's power been put to proof ;
Beneath thy care, a flickering breath
Has wafted back from gates of death ;
Beneath thy love, can words express
Thy Queen's heartfelt indebtedness ?
Know from this hour, on land or sea,
That Scotland owes her Queen to thee.

"Adieu, Sir Abbot ! Thanks again
For consolation in my pain.
For kindly thought, for comfort given,
2310 For making smooth my path to heaven,
For prayers by night, for prayers by day,
For every act of courtesy.
Who knows ! perchance it might have been
A boon had Scotland lost her Queen.
Tho' Death came near his goal, he failed,
For, thanks to Heaven, thy prayers prevailed.
The thought of thy kind heart and thee
Shall live within my memory.
And know, where'er my feet may roam,
2320 Thy precepts live, Lord Abbot Home !"
(Note A.S.)

The Abbot breathed in his reply
Words full of faith and loyalty.
Then, raised on high his saintly hand,
While near the Queen he took his stand,
And sought in fervent Latin prayer,
A heavenly benediction there.
Then dropping on his bended knee,
From pride and affectation free,
Amid the highest in the land,
2330 He kissed Queen Mary's shapely hand.
Then bowing, slowly made his way
Back thro' the silent company.

- The Queen, a moment lost in thought,
 His quaint, retreating figure sought,
 Then quickly calling into play
 Her latent powers in regal way
 She summoned to her side the men—
 The pride of many a Border glen—
 Who were to ride in proud array,
 And guard their Queen upon her way.
- 2340 " Now, gallants, forward ! squire and knight
 Ride on ! for ere the fading light,
 And ere with stately fall and swell,
 Is heard the evening curfew bell,
 With ordered front, we must attain
 The shelter of sweet Kelso's fane. (Note A.T.)
 So forward, nobles ! forward all !
 To order let confusion fall.
 Advance, ye archers ! pikemen too !
 2360 And gather near, my maidens true,
 Then by the Bongate ride away,
 Let nothing hinder nor delay.
 For chill November's hours of light
 Are few and short. Their passing flight
 Puts helm about and points the prow
 Of " Duty," to the beacon " Now."
 With progress fair, methinks we should
 Present before old Holyrood
 A cavalcade of horse and men
 2380 That it would welcome back again.
 Tho' Bothwell has a prior claim,
 I'll lead ye forward in his name,
 Until Dunedin's towers appear,
 Then shew your Jeddart-axe and spear, (Note A.U.)
 And prove their strength—should aught disorder—
 With yours, ye stalwarts of the Border."
- Thus like a lovely fading dream,
 Or like a flickering sunny beam,
 Passed Scotia's Queen, a vision pale,
 2370 Beyond the shelter of the vale
 Where flows the classic, winding Jed,
 Within its mossy-covered bed.
 No nearer might a mortal's breath
 Approach the opening gates of Death :



HOLYROOD PALACE AND CHAPEL.

- No nearer might a human soul
 Attain Eternity—its goal—
 Than Scotia's Queen approached the side
 Of that grim stream whose waves divide
 The city of immortal light
 2380 From scenes of earthly gloom and night.
 She heard its turbid waters roll
 Beside her quivering, halting soul.
 She saw, reflected in its tide,
 The brightness of its further side.
 She felt its icy waters thrill
 Her soul with more than earthly chill.
 Then starting back, she sought again
 The paths of life's well-trodden plain,
 As faded from her brightening eye,
 2390 This glimpse of near Eternity.
 While loving hands, stretched out to save,
 A welcome to her spirit gave,
 And snatched it from the threat'ning gloom
 Shrouding the portals of the tomb.
 While eyes with sorrow heavy grown,
 Peered anxiously, for light had flown.
 But smiling soon, with rapture viewed
 The advent of her life renewed.
- Ill-fated beauty ! slandered Queen !
 2400 Posterity had kinder been,
 Had thy sweet spirit forced the rent
 In its enfeebled tenement,
 When faltering there, with bated breath,
 In sight of all-embracing death,
 And flown beyond the reach of lies
 To a celestial paradise,
 Then tongues which now so wildly scream
 Against thee—had another theme.
 Then had the hearts that blast thy fame
 2410 Been spared their crime, their sin, their shame.
 Then had the pens that write untruth
 Against thee—glorified thy youth.
- But place e'en now the loudest tongue
 That hath foul words against thee flung
 Within thy lips, and let the stress
 Of warring creeds the mind distress.

It soon would prove in sad surprise,
 That then, as now, thy words were wise,
 But place a pen in friendly hand,
 2430 And see how long thy slanderers stand
 In face of truth ! in face of worth !
 Their malice ne'er had owned a birth.
 For where ! oh, where on hist'ry's page,
 Had one poor heart such war to wage ?
 Where oftener was a trust betrayed ?
 Where worse was faction ever swayed ?
 And when was Bigotry, or worse,
 Fanaticism, such a curse,
 As in thy fatal, blighted reign,
 2435 Sweet " Queen of Scots ? " Thy like again
 The world, alas ! has never seen,
 For only once lives such a queen.
 Now, late in time, is partly drawn
 The veil aside, and truth will dawn
 Upon the seething waste of lies,
 The bastards of thine enemies,
 And soon the worst they can relate
 Will shew thee but unfortunate,
 For Hate may not forever blight
 2440 The sanctity of Virtue's light.



NOTES.

Note A., Line 117.—The “Mercat Cross” was, in ancient days, the place from which all important notices and proclamations were made in the various burgh townships throughout Scotland. Even the laws of the country, as they were enacted, were made known from the “Mercat Cross,” by the Town Clerk or Provost of the Burgh, to the citizens, who were summoned by the town-crier or drummer to hear the Act read or proclaimed.

Note B., Line 139.—Bothwell’s charger “Satan” is several times mentioned in tales of the Borders; a horse of immense size, and entirely black, and of a very fiery nature. Popular fancy attributed to him the disguise of Satan himself, and it was said that at night he had been known to breathe forth fire and smoke from his nostrils. On one occasion, indeed, he had unfolded great black wings and flown with his master away into the night. Lord Bothwell, who is reported to have been educated far in advance of his time, with grim humour encouraged these fantastic tales. Stories of a similar nature were related of Claverhouse’s charger at a much later date. (See note in Sir Walter Scott’s “Old Mortality.”) Beverley was a favourite servant of Bothwell’s, who followed him into exile, and died in Holland.

Note C., Line 148.—In the days of the Stuarts, whenever a county or district became unsettled or lawless, the various nobles or chiefs of that district were obliged to seize offenders and lodge them in the county prison pending the arrival of the sovereign in person to dispense justice at a *Justice Ayre*. In the present instance the Border lairds were summoned, with their retainers provisioned for twenty days, to attend on Queen Mary, and give an account of their various districts, as well as to act as a kind of bodyguard while she was in their midst.

Note D., Line 152.—That a very strong fortress or castle existed on the Castle-hill overlooking the town of Jedburgh, is now a well-authenticated fact. As far back as 950 we find

that the Archbishop of York was imprisoned in Judanbyrig—the very ancient name of Jedburgh. Being only a few miles from the English Border, it was the centre of constant fighting and raiding. Consequently, it was the place generally chosen by the reigning sovereign for the dispensation of justice, and the punishment of the turbulent Borderers, whose motto might have been that of the Highland chief:—

“—The robber's simple plan
That they should take who have the power,
And they should keep who can.”

The “Justice Ayre” here spoken of was not by any means the first that had been held in Jedburgh for the punishment of the Border raiders and freebooters. (See Note P.) The jail or castle in the time of Queen Mary must have been in a much more efficient state than at the end of the nineteenth century. On one occasion the jailor approached the Provost, and complained that the door of the prison was “off its hinges”—age, indeed, had rusted the door from its hangings—and how were the prisoners to be guarded. The chief magistrate was at a loss, until, by a happy inspiration, he instructed the jailor to procure a good harrow, and, erecting it across the doorway, to place the teeth or prongs inwards, adding, “If the jail-birds can get through that, they maunna be worth keepin’.” (Tanner’s “Annals of a Border Club.”)

Note E., Line 188.—“Ride” is used here more in a figurative sense than in the ordinary acceptance of the word. In the reivers’ days a “ride” meant a “raid” or “foray,” and a common expression in prints of the period is a “ride into Northumberland,” meaning, of course, an incursion by raiders to the farms or keeps in that county for the purpose of plunder, and often rapine and murder.

Note F., Line 248.—“Lieutenant of the Border Marches” is perhaps the more correct designation of Lord Bothwell at this time.

Note G., Line 249.—Hermitage Castle, the scene of so much that concerned the life of the Borderland in the sixteenth century, is now a shrine to which all interested in Border history and antiquity make a well-repaid pilgrimage. It stands on the left bank of the river Hermitage about three miles from Steele Road Station, and five miles from Newcastleton. Dr Burton says it is perhaps the oldest baronial building in Scotland. Its position is one of great natural strength, which, in

its palmy days, was enhanced by earthworks and a deep fosse on three sides, while on the fourth the river was a natural protection. The castle was founded early in the thirteenth century by Walter, one of the Soulis family. (See Note H.) In 1320, Robert the Bruce granted Liddesdale to the Grahames of Abercorn, the heiress of which family married Sir Wm. Douglas, the "flower of chivalry." About 1490 their descendant Archibald Douglas, fifth Earl of Angus, exchanged Liddesdale for Bothwell Castle on the Clyde with Patrick Hepburn, first Earl of Bothwell, and thus James Hepburn, fourth Earl of Bothwell, was the possessor of Hermitage Castle in 1566 when Queen Mary and her Court visited him after his combat with Elliot of Park. Rumour has it that the castle is gradually sinking into the ground under the weight of the accumulated guilt of its 700 years of infamy. The whole district, indeed, teems with traditional and historic lore, much of which has been preserved by Sir Walter Scott in his "Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border." The present proprietor of Hermitage Castle, the genial Duke of Buccleuch, is good enough to allow visitors interested to inspect at their leisure this fine old Scottish pile.

Note H., Line 345.—The Castle of Hermitage was founded by Walter (some authorities say Nicholas) de Soulis in 1244, whose descendants held it for 100 years ere it passed to the Douglasses, Hepburns, and lastly to the Scots of Buccleuch, in whose possession it still remains. (See Note G.)

Note I., Line 363.—There have been Armstrongs of Gilnockie connected with almost every Border foray since the erection of the keep or castle as far back as 1290. The father of the freebooter here spoken of was treacherously slain with his followers near Teviothead and lies buried, curiously enough, close to the revered tomb of Henry Scott Riddell, the author of "Scotland yet!" A later descendant of the Armstrongs was the celebrated "Christie's Will," who was of much service to the house of Traquair, kidnapping, till a case in which it was interested was decided, Lord Durie, the President of the Court of Session, who might have wrought against it. Gilnockie Tower is now a ruin close to the thriving Border town of Langholm.

Note J., Line 370.—"Nine-stane-rig" is a Druidical circle a little to the east of Hermitage Castle. Here it was that the last of the house of Soulis was done to death by his oppressed domestics. Exasperated by his continued and nameless

cruelties, they seized their master, and placing him in a huge copper cauldron (still to be seen in Dalkeith Palace) he was literally boiled to death in sight of his own castle. Here also Barthram was shot by nine brothers whose sister he had wronged. The youths buried him by the "Nine-stane-burn" close at hand.

Note K., Line 568.—Mangerton Castle was situated on the river Liddel about six miles from Hermitage. It was for long the headquarters of the Border Armstrongs, but, with the Castle of Park—an Elliot stronghold—it has long since crumbled, and the sites are now all that remain.

Note L., Line 893.—"Wife-betrayer."—There is no gain-saying the fact that one of the strongest characters of this period was James Hepburn, fourth Earl of Bothwell. A man of strong, forceful character, but "dour and steive," as a contemporary calls him, he seems to have exercised an extraordinary attraction to the women of his time. He had been outlawed, and had travelled over most of Western Europe. Rumour said he had married and deserted a Flemish wife; also that he had wedded the Lady of Branksome, of witchcraft origin. In any case, he married, in the Queen's presence, Lady Jane Gordon, from whom he was divorced when it suited him to know that she was within the forbidden bands of consanguinity. Little is known of Bothwell until after his father's death in 1556. In 1560 he was one of the Lords who went to France to bring Queen Mary home to Scotland. In 1562, in league with Arran, he plotted to carry off the Queen. This was discovered, however, and he fled to France till 1565, when Queen Mary recalled him, and he rapidly rose in Royal favour. In 1566 he was wounded at Hermitage by Elliot. In 1567 he was one of those accused of the murder of Darnley. The same year he carried off and married Queen Mary in his castle at Dunbar; the Lords collected their forces, however, and he was obliged to fly. We next hear of him in Orkney, where for a time he roamed the seas as a privateer. Being pursued in his ship, he was at length captured by a Danish cruiser and imprisoned in Copenhagen. He was finally incarcerated in Draxholm Castle, where he died in 1575. On his deathbed, he made a full exoneration of Queen Mary, and repented bitterly his treatment of her, with the position of humiliation to which his connection with her had brought her.

Note M., Line 908.—"Hereford's hand."—In 1545 Hereford became Lord Somerset. He was a fierce, blood-

thirsty man, and as a servant of Henry VIII, he was allowed to vent his characteristics to the full on the devoted Scots. In 1544 he ravaged the Borderland with fearful cruelty, and advanced nearly to Stirling. In the following year we find him at the old task, and it was under his leadership that the battle of Pinkie was fought and lost to the Scots. After this conflict, he was obliged to hurry back to England, else the consequences to Scotland might have been even more disastrous than they were. The marks of fire and devastation inflicted by Hereford are noticeable on some of our old Scottish Abbeys even to this day.

Note N., Line 945.—This was money sent in 1559 by Queen Elizabeth to assist the "Lords of the Congregation," which, it is said, was intercepted by Bothwell and put to a different use. Queen Mary may have benefited by this money, but in 1565 a sum of 5000 crowns was sent her by the Pope, when the ship containing it became a wreck on the coast of the Earl of Northumberland's estate, and was claimed by him under some very old Norman law, so that he refused to refund a single crown, even through correspondence passed between Queen Mary and Elizabeth regarding it.

Note O., Line 1060.—The encounter between Bothwell and Elliot of Park (Little Jock Elliot) is described in quite a number of forms. From what appears to be the most authentic, Bothwell had taken Elliot a prisoner, when he asked his captor "had he any wish to see him hung," to which Bothwell replied that he bore him no ill-will and would be pleased enough "gin an assize wad mak' him clean" (i.e. give him his liberty). Bothwell had not disarmed Elliot when he took him, and he treacherously turned and stabbed him, intending to make his escape. Bothwell was severely wounded, but shot at Elliot with his pistol with such effect that Elliot was found dead less than a mile from where the fray occurred. This, however, is only one of the accounts of how Bothwell was wounded and carried to Hermitage, and the renowned "Little Jock Elliot" met his death at the hands of Queen Mary's "Lieutenant of the Border Marches."

Note P., Line 1191.—"Mary's Edict,"—As early as 1561 Queen Mary was obliged to issue Edicts for the pacification of the Borders. In that year her brother Lord James came to the district and visited summary justice on a large number. The whole Border was in such a disordered state that the Shires of Roxburgh, Berwick, Selkirk, Peebles and the two Lothians

were required to furnish Lord James with nobles, freeholders, and fighting men as a protection and escort to enforce his decrees. His visit to Jedburgh was not in vain. Twenty-eight of one clan were executed, their houses burned, and a large number taken prisoners to Edinburgh, while the Border chiefs were required to repair to the capital, and give sureties for their behaviour, and promises to keep the peace within their own domains. The next year, 1562, saw Lord James, now Earl of Mar, again on the Borders. His headquarters on this occasion were in Hawick. Once more large numbers were arrested, and numbers had to be drowned, as there was a scarcity of wood for halters. In 1564 the Elliots and the Scotts were at feud; many on both sides were murdered, and in July 1565 nearly 100 Scotts fell into an ambush of Elliots and were slain or taken prisoners. It was not until the summer of 1566 that the quarrel was made up, when they both joined forces, and *raided England*! Such was Border life in the sixteenth century. There was need for more than Edicts to keep the turbulent Borderers in check.

Note R., Line 1428.—"Gretna Green;"—A village in Dumfriesshire famous for the number of irregular marriages performed there. It was only in 1856 that a special Act of Parliament was enacted declaring these illegal and requiring twenty-one days' residence before the ceremony could lawfully be accomplished. Another famous "Border marriage" house is still in existence near Coldstream in Berwickshire, where no fewer than three Lord Chancellors of England were married in Scottish territory.

Note S., Line 1646.—"Claim of Spurs."—This was a means adopted by the "lady of the house" when her larder was empty for getting it replenished. The festive board was spread, master and retainers were gathered round for the usual meal, but when the cover was removed there was seen, not a huge sirloin of beef, but a pair of spurs on an otherwise empty plate. Thus she proclaimed that to eat they must raid. This they were not generally loath to do, and soon would return with flocks of sheep and cattle taken by force from their weaker or less watchful neighbours.

PART II.

Note T., Line 115.—"Sulking by the Clyde."—After the death of Rizzio, the breach between Queen Mary and Darnley seems to have become gradually more and more pronounced. The Queen, on several occasions, slighted him—and no wonder—and his haughty spirit could not brook that the courtiers

should pay more homage to his Queen than to himself. It is known, however, that she invited him to accompany her to the Borders, but, afraid of the scant courtesy which would be accorded to him by Huntley, Moray, Bothwell and the others, he dallied until his Queen was obliged to set out for the "Justice Ayre" without him. He seems to have poured his complaints into the ear of De Croc, the French ambassador, who asked him to say what he really wanted, and he would place his demands before the Queen and her Council. "I want to fill the same position that I did when I was first married," he replied. "That is quite impossible," said De Croc. "You ought to have kept your place when you had it. You have offended the Queen, and you cannot expect that she will give it you again. You ought to think yourself very fortunate that she honours you as she does, treating you as her husband, and providing you and your house with everything." (Labanoff, Vol. I.)

Note U., Line 324.—"Bride for Prince Edward."—The amount of energy, diplomacy, cleverness and strategy that King Henry VIII displayed in seeking to gain possession of the infant Queen Mary were worthy of a better cause, and certainly deserved more success than resulted from them. He sought to embroil the Scottish Parliament in treaties to obtain her; then he tried secret individual means. The Earl of Angus, when on a visit, was commissioned to seize the child and carry her off; but this became known, and the vigilance of her watchers was redoubled. Then "Bluff King Hal" died. His scheme however, was eagerly pursued by Hereford, now Lord Somerset, and but for the astuteness of Mary of Guise, Queen Mary's mother—who was a born diplomat—along with some of the Scottish and French nobles, the whole course of Scottish history might have been altered, and the little maid—at this time only seven years old—would have sat on the throne of England in place of Elizabeth. Somerset was on the Borders with a force of nearly 20,000 men; the English fleet blockaded the mouth of the Forth, and the city of Edinburgh was ravaged and burned. The French fleet, however, sent to bring the young Queen to France, cleverly evaded Somerset's ships, and, sailing round the north of Scotland, embarked their little passenger at Dumbarton, and, continuing their voyage down the west coast, reached France in safety; while Somerset, unable to follow up his chance victory at Pinkie, was obliged to return to England a discomfited and disappointed general. Truly, from her birth poor Queen Mary was the constant cause of strife and bloodshed.

Note V., Line 442.—"Solway's Quicksands."—The Solway is perhaps one of the most treacherous of British firths. All its tides are rapid, and are rather rushes or careering races of waters than natural currents or tides. A spring-tide in the Solway before a S. or S.W. breeze is a thing once seen not easily forgotten. The surge of waters rushes along at a rate of ten or twelve miles an hour, and its tumultuous roar can be heard nearly two hours before it is seen by a person standing on one of its inner shores. The tides being of this nature, quicksands are very common, and unless a wanderer on its muddy flats notes the sunken hollows of the previous tide, he may easily find himself in difficulties. (See Sir Walter Scott's "Redgauntlet" and Crockett's "Raiders.")

Note W., Line 575.—"England's Barren Stock."—On the morning of June 19, 1566, Queen Mary's son was born in Edinburgh Castle, and Mary Beaton ran out with the glad news to the waiting courtiers. The message was barely uttered ere Melville was in the saddle, and scouring southwards as fast as horse could carry him. Four days later he reached London. Cecil heard the news that evening, and at a late hour he whispered it to Queen Elizabeth in Greenwich amid music and dancing. In a moment of fierce jealousy she uttered the now famous saying:—"Mary is the mother of a fine son, and I am a barren stock." In the morning, however, her diplomacy had returned, and she received the Scottish courtier with smiles of feigned pleasure.

Note X., Line 674.—"Note-o'-the-Gate."—According to some authorities, the "point" or "direction of the way." Old Border folks still say, "What gate are ye gaun?" i.e. "What way are you going." The name derivation, however, seems to be somewhat dubious. "Note-o'-gate" is a hill near the source of the river Liddel.

Note Y., Line 773.—"Michael Servet or Servetus."—A Spaniard born in 1509, and burned at the stake for his supposed dealings in witchcraft in 1553. It was largely owing to the researches of Servet in Anatomy that the celebrated Harvey was enabled to discover, a few years after the Spaniard's death, the vital principle of the circulation of the blood. Servet in his treatise issued in 1531 speaks of the blood as being "conveyed" to all parts of the body. In 1559 this statement was followed up and enlarged on by Columbus of Venice. About the same time, young Harvey, studying under Fabricius of Padua, learned of the valves in the veins at the extremities,

which was practically the beginnings of the discovery of blood circulation. It is said that Servet was the first to protest against the universal habit of "bleeding" to allay fever, hence the passage in the text put into the mouth of Bothwell,

Note Z., Line 880.—There is possibly no incident in the life of Queen Mary that has been so misstated or misconstrued as her visit to Jedburgh and ride to Hermitage Castle. It was on the 7th Oct., 1566, that Bothwell fought Elliot of Park near Hermitage. On the 8th Queen Mary and her retinue arrived in Jedburgh. She was busy with her "*Justice Ayre*" until the 13th, when she adjourned it. On the 14th, with Lord Murray, Lethington and her other nobles, she attended a conference between the warden of the English Eastern Marches and her officers. It was not, therefore, until the 15th that she rode to Hermitage, where, with all her retinue, she continued for two hours by the couch of her wounded lieutenant. Certainly this is very unlike the course of royal amours. Queen Mary, after riding back to Jedburgh the same night, took suddenly ill on the 17th. On the 22nd, as again on the 25th, she was thought to be *in articulo mortis*, indeed, according to the historian Nau, Murray began to seize plate, jewellery, and other valuables—but from that date, the 25th, she continued to improve, until on 15th November she, accompanied by all her nobles and 500 horsemen, began her slow journey back to Edinburgh *via* Kelso, Eyemouth, Dunbar, and the East Coast, to prepare for the christening of her infant son in Holyrood Chapel.

Note A.A., Line 1198.—"The Queen's Mire."—When galloping across a marshy plain on her return to Jedburgh, the Queen's pony sank to the saddle-girths in a bog. This is still known as "The Queen's Mire," and a silver spur found long afterwards is claimed as one that belonged to the fair rider.

Note A.B., Line 1264.—"Mary thought dead."—Whatever was the primary cause of Queen Mary's nearly fatal illness in Jedburgh, credit must be given to her French physician Arnault for his treatment of the undoubted complications with which he was face to face. Her infant son was barely three months old when his mother undertook her wearing journey of pacification to the Borders. Queen Mary was never a particularly physically strong woman, and the severe strain of her recent years must have been telling forcibly on her constitution. Her husband's incapacity, Rizzio's murder, Queen Elizabeth's duplicity, her half-brother's astuteness and over-reaching ways, with numerous other worries, had reduced her strength,

and her fateful ride to Hermitage had put the copestone to her weakness. Inflammation of the lungs seems to have been the first disease which o'ercame her, then a raging fever attacked her weakened frame, and for a week she lay at death's door. On 24th October she rallied somewhat, but on the 25th she seemed to her wearied nurses and watchers to have "crossed the Stygian stream." Old mediciner Arnault was the only one who seemed to believe that the flicker of life was still manifest. Her Bishop recited the prayers for the dead. Mary Seaton threw open the window of her chamber to "allow her spirit to pass upward," while Murray, her half-brother, seized the valuables near. Arnault, however, applied tight bandages to her limbs and knees, and was successful after nearly an hour's effort in restoring animation. She turned her head, and murmuring, "Ora pro Nobis," she fell asleep, when a great perspiration broke over her, and the crisis of her fever was past.

Note A.C., Line 1357.—"The arms of one."—Lethington. —Maitland of Lethington is undoubtedly one of the many notable characters in this period of Queen Mary's reign. He has been spoken of as "the flower of the wits of Scotland." A man of courteous exterior, diplomatic in behaviour, and a courtier in the then sense of the word—not above double-dealing or questionable practices when they suited his own ends. He was at first an opponent of the Queen's policy, but became later her secretary and confidante. In many ways he was a useful servant to a Queen who often had a difficulty in knowing who was really friend or enemy. He had an ardent admiration for one of the "Queen's Maries," One account gives it as Mary Beaton, another as Mary Seaton, with whom he was in love. The writer inclines to the latter as the more likely of the two.

Note A.D., Line 1361.—"Inchmahome."—Somerset was in Scotland with blood and fire in his train, and the little queen was sent with her tutor Erskine and her "four Maries" to the priory of Inchmahome on the shores of the Lake of Menteith until the storm blew past. The castle of Stirling was very strongly garrisoned for her protection, and whether through ignorance or inability to reach her, the English marched south again, and even the victory at Pinkie made the union of Mary and Prince Edward no nearer than before. Many romantic tales are told of this visit—only of a few months' duration—to Inchmahome; of mimic courts, childish excursions, and many other childlike pleasures. It was while she was here that the

arrangements were completed for her union with Francis II. of France. She was about six years old, and had been already thrice promised in marriage.

Note A.F., Line 1463.—"Queen's four Maries."—As long as time shall last a halo of romance will surround the heads of the four girls and women who were so long the faithful friends and companions of the most interesting woman and queen that adorns the page of history. As children they played with her at Inchmahome, and accompanied her to France; as young women they were present at her wedding with Francis, and returned with her to Scotland as a widow. The first to leave her seems to have been Mary Livingstone, who married the English ambassador Semple, and retired with him to England about the time that Queen Mary married Darnley. Mary Fleming, her cousin and playmate, shared her room and bed as long as she was in fear of the Frenchman Chastelard. Her father was a life-long supporter of, and befriended, Queen Mary in many trying situations. Mary Beaton "the brightest of them all," was the maiden chosen to break the news of the murder of the Queen's two uncles to her. She it was, also, who gave Melville the message to Queen Elizabeth when the infant prince was born. Mary Seaton seems to have been an especial favourite. It was to her father's house that Darnley and the Queen retired after their secret marriage. There also, under cover of night, did they fly on the night following Rizzio's murder; and there also did the Queen seek a temporary haven after the murder of Darnley. Lord Seaton proved himself one of the Queen's staunchest friends. When she escaped from Loch Leven, he raised and commanded at Langside a troop of 300 horse, and was one of the last to leave that fatal field. Mary Seaton died an old, decayed abbess in a convent in France of which she was the principal, long after her loved mistress had paid the penalty of her unfortunate position with her life.

Note A.F., Line 1614.—"Darnley's visit to Jedburgh."—As we saw in "Note T.," Queen Mary invited her husband to accompany her to the Borders where she arrived on October, 1566. On the 15th she rode to Hermitage, on the 16th she was stricken down by fever, on the 22nd and again on the 25th she had, to all appearance, died, and yet Darnley made no visit to her until the 28th or 29th. According to her physician's statement, his behaviour was such when he *did* come, that it would have seriously injured Queen Mary to have been troubled with him, and he was not allowed to share her apartments in

"Queen Mary's House." He rode off in high dudgeon to Stirling on the following morning.

Note A.G., Line 1655.—"Dudley."—Francis of France was scarcely dead ere rumour and Queen Elizabeth were busy seeking out his successor to the hand of Mary. Mary herself seems to have known that it would be necessary for her to marry, but as to who was to be the successor to her dead Francis she does not seem at this time to have troubled herself. Her letters to Elizabeth are all written as if she left the choice of a husband to her cousin of England. Elizabeth, on her side, hinted at some great match which she had prepared for her "loved cousin," but would never divulge who the favoured individual was. At length, much to Mary's disgust, it transpired that it was Queen Elizabeth's cast-off lover the Earl of Leicester, who was even reputed to have murdered his own wife that he might aspire to Elizabeth's hand, which hand, however, he never obtained. That Queen Elizabeth was in earnest in proposing the Earl of Leicester for Queen Mary is extremely doubtful.

Note A.H., Line 1668.—"Sir Thos. Ker"—Warden of the Middle Marches, and Provost of Edinburgh and Jedburgh, suffered much for his devotion to the cause of his Queen. The house in which Queen Mary was lodged during her sickness in Jedburgh belonged to him, while his Lady was one of the Queen's most devoted nurses and attendants during her enforced stay, illness, and convalescence there.

Note A.K., Line 1799.—"Darnley's treachery."—His enemies noting Darnley's eagerness for the crown matrimonial, encouraged him in his discontent in every possible way. He was, even though a known Catholic, in league with Murray, Argyle, and the Protestants, who were to help him to gain his point, in return for which they were to receive their forfeited estates and titles. However loud Argyle and Murray might talk, when it came to the actuality of taking a side either for or against the Queen, they hung back, and Darnley was in a greater quandary than ever. He now began to see that he had been duped. Even Bothwell could do without him, and his position became more of a sinecure than ever, and in putulence he made up his mind to quit the country and fly to France.

Note A.L., Line 2060.—"Vaults of Chenonceau."—In November, 1560, Mary and her husband Francis had been obliged, by pressure of State affairs, to remain at Orleans, but at the beginning of December his enfeebled health necessitated

a change to Chenonceau. The palace was dismantled, tapestry, etc., all removed previous to and in preparation for the journey of the King and Queen, and the Royal pair attended a service in the church before setting out. The cold, wintry air, however, so affected Francis than he had to be carried back to the palace, where a mattress was hastily spread for him, and from which he never rose. His loving wife never left his side, and there in that dismal, dismantled room, she ministered to his every want with her own hands, indeed, she was left alone to do it. Francis' heartless Italian mother, Catherine-di-Medici, seemed almost glad that her son's life was ebbing from him. He had been amenable mostly to his wife's wishes, and his crafty mother longed for the supreme power, and her callous nature could not help shewing her grim satisfaction at the turn affairs were taking. At Francis' death his mother leapt at once to the summit of her ambition, and shewed her ill-will to Queen Mary by personal slights, and the forcing of her two uncles from their positions as the leaders of Church and State in France.

Note A.M., Line 2061.—"Orphaned and widowed in one year."—This year, 1560, was a sad one for Queen Mary. Her mother, whom she had loved with a passionate affection, died in Edinburgh Castle in June, after a stormy regency of nearly six years. Five months later—in December—her loved Francis too, was taken from her. Thus, on a girl in her teens was thrown the responsibility of two kingdoms in the throes of religious controversy, as well as being the victim of Queen Elizabeth's jealousy and ill-will. A heritage of sorrow that a strong man might have bent under, to say nothing of a delicate girl, with practically neither guide nor councillor on whom she could absolutely rely.

Note A.N., Line 2066.—By a strange coincidence, Queen Mary, the one female sovereign of the Stuart dynasty, was preceded by seven kings, and also succeeded by seven, most of whom died unnatural deaths. Robert II. died amid the turmoil of a divided family; Robert III. died of a broken heart. James I. spent most of his life in prison, and died by the assassin's knife; James II. was killed at Roxburgh Castle by the bursting of a cannon; James III. was murdered after the battle of Sauchie Burn; James IV. died on Flodden Field; James V. died of a broken heart in Falkland Palace; *Queen Mary* died by the executioner's knife in England; James VI. succeeded to the crown of the two countries, but lived in continual fear of assassination; Charles I. died on the scaffold; Charles II. spent

most of his life in exile; James VII. forsook the throne which James VIII. never occupied. Prince Charles Edward, after a spasmodic attempt, failed to gain the crown. His brother, Duke of York, voluntarily became Cardinal, and thus excluded himself from the succession.

Note A.O., Line 2072.—Unfortunate King James V., after the rout of Solway Moss, lay dying in Falkland Palace when news was brought him of the birth of a female heir to his crown. He received the intelligence as the last stroke of an adverse Fate, for he had vainly hoped for a son. "The devil go with it," he murmured; "it *came* with a lass, and it will go with a lass." A day or two later he died of a broken heart, if ever man did, never having seen the heiress to his crown, and also to his misfortunes.

Note A.P., Line 2129.—"A valet entered."—Bastien, a Frenchman and a very valued servant of Queen Mary. It was his marriage that she attended on the night that Darnley was so foully murdered. On some of the anonymous placards fixed up in Edinburgh after that event, Bastien, along with Bothwell, Rizzio's brother, and others were accused as the perpetrators of it. It is hardly likely that Bastien would leave the side of a newly-married wife to commit a murder, but a strange circumstance about it was certainly his, Bastien's, immediate disappearance after the hue and cry was raised regarding it.

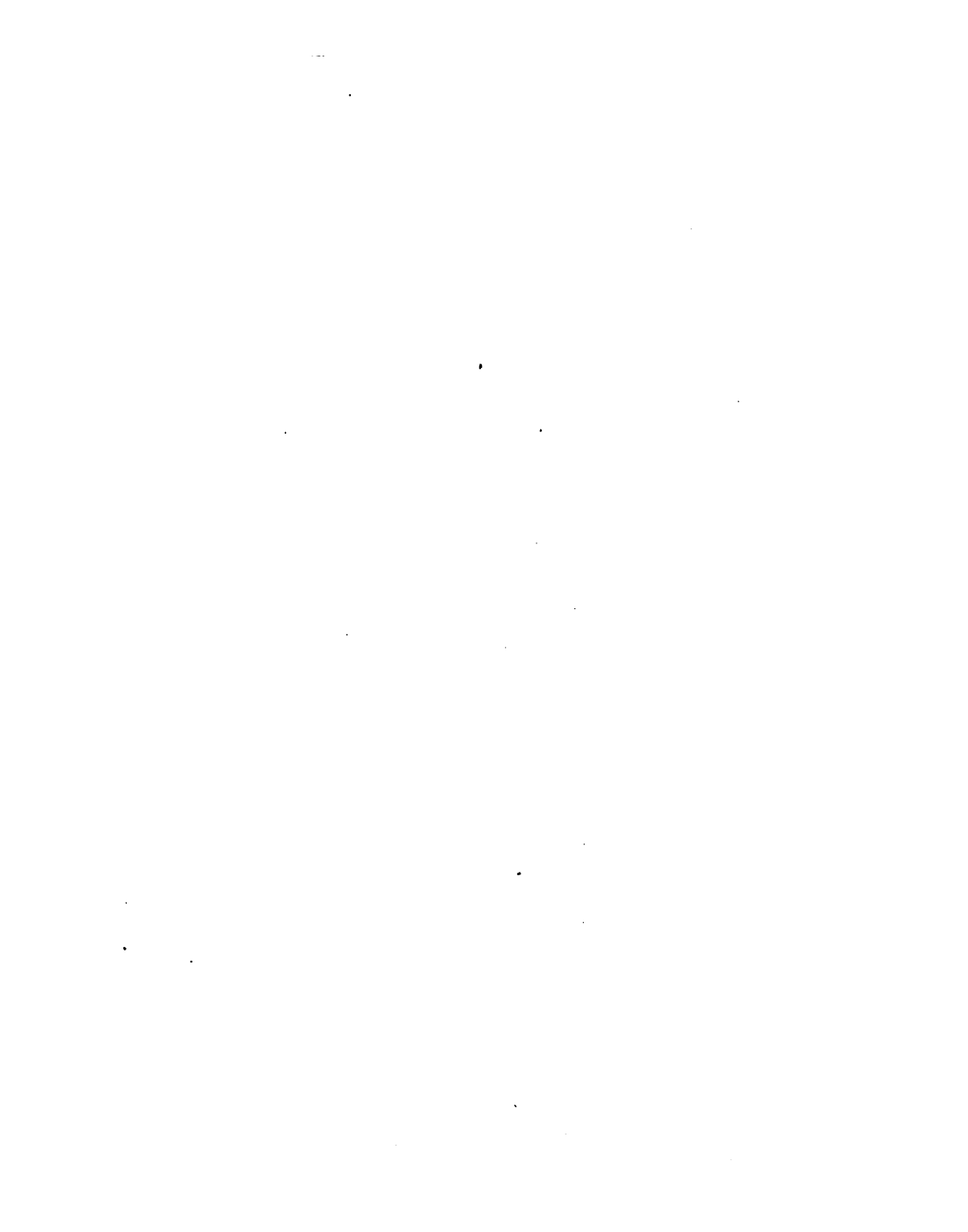
Note A.R., Line 2298.—The house in which Queen Mary lived while on her visit to Jedburgh, notwithstanding much improvement, remains much the same as when she inhabited it. The orchard round it, and the lawn stretching down to the riverside, recall the days when her fevered eyes would gaze languidly from the little turret windows to the wooded bank beyond. On the walls may still be seen the tapestry which her maidens wrought in their waiting hours, a representation of Jacob and Esau, and though faded and dull with age, the figures are natural and shapely. Queen Mary gave Lady Ker £40 ere she left, besides causing £20 to be distributed among the poor of Jedburgh as a thank-offering for her recovery.

Note A.S., Line 2320.—"Abbot Home," nephew of the previous abbot and son of George, Fourth Earl of Home, was abbot of Jedburgh Abbey from 1560 until his death in 1599. He must have been the last who held office as abbot under the old monastic rule, as the time of the Reformation was at hand,

and the Lords of the Congregation were nominating ministers for churches over all the Borders and Lowlands. That Abbot Home was a man of public spirit is proved by the number of Conventions, etc., of which he was a member. [See "Jedburgh Abbey" (2nd Edition) by James Watson.]

Note A.T., Line 2346.—On 14th November, 1566, Queen Mary left Jedburgh, and spent the first night of her homeward journey in Kelso. Here a letter from Darnley was brought to her full of the usual grumbling and discontent. In her weak state she became very agitated, and even spoke in her distress of suicide. She had with her Murray, Argyle, Lethington and others of her lords, and it is hinted that the Queen's agitation was the spark that kindled the fire which ultimately put an end to Darnley. Attended by her council and 500 horsemen, by easy stages she pursued her journey by Hume and Halidon Hill to Berwick, where Sir John Forster, the English warden, shewed her no little courtesy and attention. Thence she travelled by Eyemouth, Dunbar and Tantallon to Craigmillar, on the outskirts of Edinburgh, where she arrived on 20th November, nearly two months after her departure from Edinburgh, for her Border Justice Ayre.

Note A.U., Line 2365.—"Jeddart Axe."—This, in the hands of the burghers themselves, was a most deadly weapon. It was invented, as its name implies, in the town of Jedburgh, and consisted of an axe mounted on a steel-pointed pole about 4 feet long. The natives were, more or less, constantly at war with their English neighbours, and became well known all over Scotland by their effective use of this formidable weapon.



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